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SEEKING THE MIND OF CHRIST

By ROBERT E. SPEER

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SEEKING THE MIND OF CHRIST

By
ROBERT E. SPEER

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Preface

THIS is not a book on theology. It is only a gathering together of some devotional papers on different aspects of the mind of Christ as revealed in the New Testament and in Christian experience. The faith which underlies it is an assured faith in the absolute authority and deity of our Lord and in the truth of the words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you and shall be in you."

R. E. S.

New York.

Introduction

HOW SHALL WE STUDY THE LIFE AND MIND OF CHRIST?

THE study of the mind of Christ cannot be calm and dispassionate. It will be a reverent and exalted worship of our Lord. We cannot study Him satisfactorily without sympathy, and because we know Him to be our Saviour our sympathy will be eager and adoring love. And our study must be not only loving, but also imaginative. Our imaginations are given to us for this very purpose. The imagination is not the fancy or the decorative faculty. It is the great spiritual perceptive power. To it, as Bushnell says, God gives the Gospel. By it we apprehend what we cannot see. For, as Ruskin says, "What are the legitimate uses of the imagination? . . . It is given us . . . above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer." This is the first thing in the study of the mind of Christ. We must make it a real study and throw our lives out with love upon it. In this spirit we can use any method of study with profit.

The simplest method is to study Christ's life chronologically, arranging the events and incidents in their order, and studying their connection and sequence. Every life of Christ endeavours to do this, and the "harmonies," of course, embody the results. The

Gospel of Mark is the basis of such arrangements, and we can take that Gospel for ourselves, and using it as a foundation, build in the material of all the Gospels. A simple way to begin is to make a list of all the days of which any event is preserved. If we do this, we shall be surprised to see how few days are included. But the study of those few days of our Lord's life, and the full and worthy use of the imagination upon them, will make a deep impression upon us of the power and richness and interest of His life. (Books: Robinson's, or Stevens and Burton's, *Harmony;* Andrews' *Life of Our Lord.*)

Such a study of the narrative simply provides the material for a deeper study. The life of Christ is not mere annals; it is a living biography, a great drama, a tragedy. The Gospel of John works out this unfolding of Christ's life with surpassing skill. Putting them all together, there is in these brief narratives material for the most profound and significant life-unfolding ever seen among men. When we have made out the narrative of events, then we should think upon the sections in their relationship, and attempt to understand the connection of outer circumstances with the inner purpose and the fulfilling of His work and His mission. (Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah;* Stalker's *Life of Christ.*)

Or we may study the life of Christ with His teaching in the foreground. Christ is more visibly and really the teacher to those who believe in His deity than He can be to others who have a diminished conception of His person. We may study the life of Christ from the point of view of His teaching in two ways: We may seek there for the truths He taught without any thought of the way He unfolded or de-

veloped His doctrine. Or we may study the progressiveness of His revelation from the first day unto the last. He uttered His message as men were prepared to receive it. Compare, for example, Matthew 4: 17 and Matthew 16: 21. "A comparison of the evangelists," says Professor Denney in *The Death of Christ,* after quoting these two passages, " justifies us in saying broadly that a new epoch in our Lord's ministry had now begun. His audience is not so much the multitudes as the twelve; His method is not so much preaching as teaching; His subject is not so much the kingdom as Himself, and in particular His death." This is one illustration of the study of His teaching as the unfolding of a great message. A useful little book treating of the teaching of Jesus is Bosworth's *The Teaching of Our Lord.*

The parables and miracles of Jesus supply a helpful opportunity for special study. Trench's *Notes on the Parables and Miracles* is still the most useful book. We can arrange all the parables in a list, and study them one by one for their own lessons as illustrations of Christ's method, as expressions of His principles. We can classify them on this or that plan of arrangement. We can consider their Old Testament origins, where there are any, or the circumstances which suggested them. In the same way we can study the miracles, having in mind also the bearing of the miracles upon the career of Christ, and their relation to the crises in His life.

In a sense, the life of Christ was simply a school for the training of twelve men. At the outset He selected the twelve, and He took them with Him wherever He went. His object was to give them a clear understanding of His word and Himself so far as

He could do this by His influence, and to prepare them so for His death that they would be able afterwards upon meditation and recollection to realize its significance. This is one of the most interesting ways in which to study the mind of Christ, and an excellent book is available in Bruce's *Training of the Twelve*, in which we are shown Jesus at work preparing His men for their work. In this school we see Jesus moulding His disciples in their characters so as to make them what they must be as the apostles of a spiritual and universal religion, "enlightened in mind, endowed with a charity wide enough to embrace all mankind, having their consciences tremulously sensitive to all claims of duty, yet delivered from all superstitious scruples, emancipated from the fetters of custom, tradition and the commandments of men, and possessing tempers purged from pride, self-will, impatience, angry passions, vindictiveness and implacability."

And we can gain larger understanding of Christ and His will also by studying the other men and the women whose lives Christ touched with His own. We should make lists of all these people, and study the bearing of their contact with Christ upon the working out of His life plans and theirs. Christ lives in the whole New Testament and in His Church, and we must read His mind in all the teaching and work of the Spirit whom He sent.

We must remember, too, that His earthly life was lived in an Oriental land peopled with Eastern peoples, of Oriental habits and forms of thought and speech. We need to study the geography of His life on earth. A good chart like Arnold's or Kephart's will be of great value in such study. But we must remember

that the life was an Eastern life in many senses, and we shall get at all its rich meanings only as we perceive how real the incarnation was. Thomson's *The Land and the Book* and Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life* will enable us to enter into the real spirit of the society and land where our Lord's work was done.

But it is Christ Himself to whom we must come in the study of His mind. We can do this intimately by looking at Christ as a personal worker, for example, and studying His way in reaching human hearts, meeting human difficulties and helping human need. Yet this is only one aspect of His method and spirit, and we would do well to take up in a comprehensive way the study of Christ's character. The classic chapter of Horace Bushnell in *Nature and the Supernatural,* entitled "The Character of Jesus Forbids His Possible Classification with Men," indicates what can be done, but it only indicates it. Each one of us for himself can spend a lifetime upon Christ's character, studying its perfection in small things, its glorious beauties, its strength, its ideals. Seeley's *Ecce Homo,* whatever fault some may find with the book, will nevertheless help one to realize better the unique and revolutionary influence of Jesus by reason of His character.

To-day this study of the character of Christ is directed largely to His consciousness, and Forrest's *Christ of History and Experience* is a strong and useful book in this field. But with or without any helps, we can go direct to the Gospels, and study out there the picture of Christ for ourselves. What kind of man was He? What were His plans and methods? What active and passive traits of character can we discern in Him? In this way we can best answer

many of the objections made to the belief in the deity of Christ, and confirm our own faith. Bushnell made surpassing and unanswerable use of this argument.

And at this point we come to see the significance of Jesus' teaching about Himself. We can study the Gospels with this as our principle of study. What did Jesus believe about Himself? What is His teaching about the Messianic hope and His relation to it? What was His attitude toward the Old Testament, its spiritual ideals and His personal relation to them? How did He lead His disciples to understand Him, to make the great confession which Simon Peter made at Cæsarea Philippi, and to carry their convictions on, and expand and fulfill them, as the death and resurrection of Christ made possible and necessary?

Our study of Christ should lead to closer resemblance to Christ. In this duty books like Stalker's *Imago Christi,* showing Jesus as a man of prayer, a Bible student, a friend, in society, as a worker, a sufferer, a winner of souls, a philanthropist, a controversialist, a man of feeling, of influence, are of vital help. And we must get at not only the methods of Christ's life, but also the principles which controlled it or were exemplified in it, and which, because they were divine principles, must be the governing laws of our lives also. Whatever we find in Christ of spiritual habit or principle must find place in us. It will not avail us to study the work and character of the Saviour if we do not come to Him and experience His saving power. His mind must be our mind.

We must not overlook in our study the significance of the things which Jesus did not do or say which might have been done or said, the things which we

would have wrongly done or said if we had been in His place.

"He might have built a palace at a word,
Who sometimes had not where to lay His head;
Time was, and He who nourished crowds with bread
Would not one meal unto Himself afford;
Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at His beck, the scorned and buffeted;
He healed another's scratch, His own side bled,
Side, feet and hands with cruel piercings gored,
Oh, wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought;
Oh, self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none;
Oh, self-denying Love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own!"

But it is not in the Gospels only we must look for Christ's mind. The whole New Testament is its unfolding, and the Holy Spirit is ever seeking to reveal it in us.

How humbly we shall arise from such study to go about our daily work, mindful of Christ and made eager afresh to be like Him and to please Him! Let us set out now on a study of His Spirit, His ways with men, His principles of action and of life and of the mind which was in Him and should be in us.

I. THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION

1. *Of God, Not of Us.*
2. *Is Christian Salvation Unreasonable?*
3. *God's Power to Annul the Past.*
4. *The Loving Forgetfulness of God.*
5. *A Heart for Loneliness.*

1

OF GOD, NOT OF US

HRISTIAN faith is not the creation, it is the recognition, of facts. By believing, we do not make anything true that was not true before. We simply bring ourselves into accord with what is and has always been the truth. There are some who say that that is true for us which finds us or works in our case. But that only is true for us, when it finds us or works for us, which was true already in itself. There is an order, a divine order, a truth of God, true whatever we may think or deny, find or miss. Faith does not create this order. It realizes it. It is the loyal and loving acceptance of it. What we think and do is only a tardy response to the thought of God, and to what He has been ever doing for us.

It is God's love that is the fountain and continuous support of our love. Our love does not create the love of God. It is the love of God that creates our love. His love is the power of our loving. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. We love because he first loved us." God's love did not begin when we began to love God. We never would have loved either God or our brother had it not been for the love of God. His love, whether we knew it or not, begat all our love. Our love of God, as Bush-

nell pointed out, is but letting Him love us. There is an infinite comfort for the heart in these thoughts. Our love is but a faint shadow of His, a shadow that advances and retreats and quivers uncertainly. The great and steadfast love of God is not the child of this shadow. Unchanging, measureless, utterly forgiving, rich with the wealth of His infinite nature, the love of God is beneath and above and about our weak, human love, and we can rest upon His love as the great certainty beyond all our impulses. We can truthfully sing:

> "O Love, that wilt not let me go,
> I rest my weary soul in Thee;
> I give Thee back the life I owe,
> That in Thine ocean depths its flow
> May richer, fuller be."

That which is true of God's love is true, also, of His truth. It is that truth which lays hold upon us, rather than we upon it. We do not make truth by believing it. There are, to be sure, some activities of the soul which depend upon our own confidence. We can do some things only when we think we can. But such personal action is not to be confused with all the truth of God. God's truth is there irrespective of us, and our seizing it is simply the opening of our life to its seizure and sway. We do not make the truths of Christianity true for us by believing them. We simply enable ourselves to see what is true—true whether we see it or not. To lay hold on truth is no great achievement, nor does it bring any great power with it. "Our grasp of truth can never be worth much," says R. H. Hutton; "it is the grasp of the truth upon us that men are willing to die for."

And the truth is ever coming out from God to us. It came out in Christ, who is the truth, whether men recognize Him or not or come to Him as truth or not. "I felt and feel," said Maurice, "that, precious and invaluable as the truth is that the Spirit guides us into truth, the truth exists whether we are guided into it or no, and the Bible seems to me to bring it out from the opposite side; to start from a revelation of God, and to exhibit Him coming into fellowship with His creatures. I have come strongly to think that the subjective faith of F. Newman and others will never be Catholic, though they wish it to be; that it will be only a refined individualism, and must terminate in various individual superstitions; that truth must come to us, not, of course, visibly or verbally, in order that we may embrace it; that it must come to mankind in order that each man may be the better for it." The problems we face suggest a different statement of the truth from Maurice's, but the truth itself is the same; namely, that truth is independent of us, and asks to be found, not manufactured, by us.

So, also, it is God's will which seeks us, not we it. We simply allow ourselves to be found when we find. Earnest hearts often torture themselves over their duty. "What is God's will for me?" they ask, and seek in everything for an answering word. The will of God, they think, is so hard to discover. But no one can seek and miss it. The will of God is seeking us with a patience, a pleading, greater than any anguish we can ever know. It is we who darken our own skies. We look so far that we fail to see that it is the nearest thing in the world to us.

And it is the life of God which comes to us. We cannot become alive. Our life is a gift—a principle

coming in from without. God is the only source. We do not attain life by any ethical performance or procedure. The gift of God is eternal life. "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." The soul receives the living seed. It does not create it. It gets it from God. "Those lectures on the prophets and kings," said Maurice of one of his books in a letter to Daniel Macmillan, "are from first to last an attempt to ground human life and human acts on that principle. The maxim of them is, 'Nothing good in man but what was first in God,' and this, 'All men are righteous so far as they confess a calling from the righteous God and yield to it.' From which I deduce, or rather find in Scripture, this further doctrine deduced for me: 'That all false religion proceeds from the notion that man is to make his way up to God by certain acts, or by a certain faith of his, instead of receiving God's witness of Himself and yielding to His government.'" We have nothing that we have not received. In Christ was life, and that life was the light of men. We have made none of it.

And this Christ is our King. We do not make Him so. We might not have another if we liked. There is only one, and He is King whether men acknowledge it or not. If I rebel against the government, that does not wipe out the government. It merely makes me a rebel. We do not ask men to make of Christ what He is not. We ask them to acknowledge Him to be what He is. Their refusal does not destroy His Kingship, and so set them free from His sovereignty. It only stamps them as disloyal and traitorous to their true head and Lord. When the students in Japan

cabled some years ago to the students at Northfield, "Make Jesus King," they did not propose that men should make of Christ what He was not already, but only that men should recognize Christ to be what He ever has been and ever will be. We cannot deprive Him of His character, and we do not give it to Him. We only yield ourselves to it. We fall into our place. We live again in God.

So, through all the activities of the Christian life, it is God that works in us and for us and in and for the world. It is God's hope of us which creates and warrants our hope of ourselves. We cannot think highly of our possibilities until we see that God thinks so much of them as to give His Son to die for us. We despair of ever amounting to much, of ever subduing our foes and transcending our shortcomings. Then we learn that God has no such despair of us, that He expects to see us at last conformed to the image of His Son. If God has such a hope for us, we ought to awake to a hope for ourselves.

But even so, we do nothing but accept what God does. Our doing is just the opening of life to His doing. It is the virtue and righteousness of Christ which alone makes virtue and righteousness in us. It is Christ and not our character which constitutes our only confidence and hope. "One who has seen so many years of blessings," says an old man who was deemed a good deal of a rationalistic scholar in his day, and who is waiting now patiently for the end, "has no right to complain. The one thing which is most clear and emphatic in my consciousness is the fact that any hope I may cherish must rest on foundations outside of myself. I have no complacency in the record of my life. From my present standpoint, I see

more clearly than ever before the absolute need of a vicarious salvation. I shall go down to the tomb resting in this alone."

"In me," the best of men will ever cry, "there dwelleth no good. All good is in God, but we live on Him." Thither, into His infinite life and love, blessed be His name, He is calling us by His Son who, when we were sinners, came forth after us; not in vain, let us assure Him—oh, not in vain.

2

IS CHRISTIAN SALVATION UNREASONABLE?

TWO kinds of salvation are proposed to us to-day; salvation by character and salvation to character. The former is the old legal salvation by works. The latter is the Christian salvation by grace. The alternative is as old as the Gospel. According to Paul it is as old as Abraham, as old indeed as Cain and Abel. In one view we achieve salvation; in the other we receive it. According to the former, we earn it. According to the latter, it is a gift to us. Which view is reasonable?

However reasonable the idea of salvation by character may appear, it is not practicable. And both careful thought and actual experience show that it is neither practicable nor reasonable. How can that which is the end to be attained be also the means for its attainment? And where, as a matter of fact, is the man who can say that he has found this method feasible? There is not in all the world a man with a self-saved character, not one whose character entitles him to present himself as a model or illustration of self-redemption. The best men are the most humble and self-distrustful, least willing to set themselves up as of any worth or desert because of any accomplishment of theirs in the production of character. Thus, as in the days of the Pharisees, the men who would save themselves by their own achievements spoil the work from the outset by the same principle of radical

error which vitiated the whole Pharisaic ethical method. The essence of salvation is a victory over sin, which no man ever won or can win, in his own strength, and its truest mark is a beauty of humbleness which repudiates all regard for self. If the Christian salvation is not reasonable, we are in a bad way, for the other kind is impossible.

But Christian salvation is not unreasonable. On the contrary, in the first place, the ideal of it is the only ideal that can take care of the necessities of our situation; in the second place, it is a fact which we are witnessing every day; and, in the third place, while we cannot go very far into the theory of it without getting beyond our depth, the central principle of it is the only rational and practicable principle.

It is the only ideal which can take care of the necessities of our situation. As soon as we have come through upon our real souls, and measured ourselves over against the perfect, and have begun to reach not only the unconscious dereliction but also the weak or wilful defections, a sense of shame comes upon us, so deep in many men that they feel a manly acceptance of damnation to be the only possible course for them. But such feelings can only last where the soul hardens and comes to despise its true destiny and desire, and they give way in sensitive spirits to a noble penitence for what is recognized to be the guilt of sin. We want to have that lifted from us. That is our first great need, but it is not our only necessity. We are conscious of being caught in a powerful clutch. "When I would do good," said Paul, "evil is present with me." The momentum of habit, the waywardness of desire, the gravitation of the brute in us, give to sin a fearful grip upon the mind and will. We want this broken.

Where is the strong deliverer who will shatter it for us? We look for Him. He is not in our character. That is where the very forces are found which need to be rent asunder and overmastered for us. This is our second necessity. And even with this power of evil broken, we are left undone. The strength of sin shattered, we are left weak men. The will of God must be done, not merely suffered. How can we do it? There is work to be finished before the night cometh. The beauty of holiness and the fruits of righteousness are requirements of the Christian character. We must find power to produce them. This is our third great necessity. And lastly we need a fellowship richer, more penetrative, more understanding, than any human friendship can supply. We want God. No denials or skepticisms or naturalisms can do more than conceal a want they cannot eradicate. Our heart and our flesh cry out for the living God. These are the needs of our situation when we recover our souls. Only the Christian ideal of salvation covers them. It was designed precisely and conclusively to provide for them.

And the fact that it does provide for them is a fact which we are witnessing every day. We do not see a single man saving himself by his character. We constantly see men making strong use of their will and battling manfully against temptation or difficulty, and winning splendid virtues, but when the only resource of such men is their own will we always find them either ignoring certain great moral and spiritual problems altogether or, in case they discern them, utterly failing to cope with them. And even in the best of such achievements they are wanting deep undernotes of tenderness and humility and understanding, re-

sources of patience and of power, a sense of things beyond things and yet within them and, indeed—save so far as it is reflected upon them from the lives of others or the forces of Christian sentiment in the world—just that which is distinctive, precious and indispensable in the Christian salvation. And this is what we see when we take salvation by character at its best. But how seldom we find it at its best, as Saul of Tarsus, for example, represented it or, better yet, as Gamaliel or Socrates! In practical life salvation by character amounts at its highest efficiency to the practise of some of the Ten Commandments plus some Christian charity, but the virtues which are not in the Ten Commandments but which are in love, in purity of thought and desire, in true perspective of life, in forgiveness and service—these are not self-generated. And sin is not eradicated by the soil which produces it. But we do see daily the triumph of the Christian salvation over sin and its production of character where there was no character at all or where what character there was was inefficient and frail. There are thousands of saved men who know nothing of theology or psychology, but who can say with the indisputable evidence of personal experience, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The man who has been saved by the Christian salvation will be the last man to claim perfection of attainment. "I count not myself yet to have apprehended," is his word, "but I follow after." There is in him the principle of a living power producing in him, by the humbling and creative might of God, a new character. It is the presence of such men in the world that gives it, wherever the Christian salvation is known, a radically new tone.

And it is natural and inevitable that it should be so,

for the Christian salvation embodies a distinct and transforming principle, the only rational and practicable, and yet the constantly despised and rejected, principle of salvation by grace and not by works, of salvation to character, not by character. If men are to be saved at all it must be by God's goodness, and not by their own merit. A thoughtful missionary in India who has sought to take up the most sympathetic attitude toward the religious ideas of India has recently written of his entire despair of men when once the idea of salvation by merit has possessed them. It is an idea absolutely deadly. The history of India and of all mere self-culture philosophies shows how deadly it is. It is deadly because it rests on folly and falsehood. The only possible salvation must be a salvation from the pride and untruth of salvation by personal merit. The man who thinks so much of his own character as not to be ashamed of it has a lost character. The genuinely bad man knows this. So does the genuinely good man. "The peculiar doctrine which has passed into Europe under Luther's name," said J. A. Froude, "is known as Justification by Faith. . . . As originally proclaimed by Luther, it contained the deepest of moral truths. It expressed what was and is and must be, in one language or another, to the end of time, the conviction of every generous-minded man." It must be so because only love so great as to be utterly undeserved can save us, doing in us the work of purification, of humiliation, of new creation and ennoblement, of invigoration and development which is Christian salvation.

Salvation is too big a thing to be within any man's power. Yet it is within every man's reach on one condition; namely, that he will accept it as a gift and be

true to the Giver. What we cannot do, we can have. We cannot make a character, but God will make one in us. Our very inability is God's opportunity. If God were not involved, it would be otherwise; we could then work out our own salvation. Only in that case there would be no salvation worth speaking of; the end of it all would be gone. The very ideal of it would dry out and decay. But introduce God, and at once salvation becomes the restoration of the soul to Him and the only power of salvation becomes His power, who will do for us what we can only attempt to do for ourselves at the cost of increasing God's task in saving us.

3

GOD'S POWER TO ANNUL THE PAST

A MAN had wrestled free, temporarily at least, from a terrible and long besetting sin. He had earned his first wages as a delivered man. "And I'm free," he said, as he burst into the office of a friend. "These are my first wages, and what is more, I'm free. I feel so happy I could sing." This man was to weep again before he could sing his final song of freedom, but he had tasted his first joyful experience of the delivering power of God.

God has power to destroy the power of the past and to give us power over sin. We doubt this. Heredity, we say, is not a detachable thing which can be taken off from us. It is a taint that permeates "as saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all." Its influence is pervasive, and is confirmed and made enduring by the immovable and adamantine cast of character. Well, there is heredity, and there is character, and there is also God. Heredity is not God. Human character is not God. And God has not given away His living sovereignty to heredity and character. He is living in the world with power to arrest and reverse heredity, and to shatter and remould character. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and

for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us." God in Christ can annul for us the bondage of the past.

And God can relieve our hearts of the burden of shame and guilt as well as of fear and distrust. An earnest Christian preacher recently set forth the view that men are afraid they cannot be forgiven, and that that is the great reason why many men do not come to the Christian Church. If only they could feel sure that they would be forgiven, he held, multitudes who are now aloof from the Church would pour into it. But this is a mistake. The great masses of men do not care. They have no particular sense of needing to be forgiven. They commit no crimes. They feel good-naturedly toward their fellows. They are ready to give a lift to a friend in time of need. They are living decently and respectably. What more is required? And often even when they are not doing all this they are not concerned. "We are made of flesh and blood. God made us so. He put the things we like in the world. If we take them, it is only doing as we were made to like to do. Death unquestionably is not pleasant to contemplate, but it is inevitable, and it falls but once, and we will have our time and face whatever is coming, if there is anything coming at the end." This is the common mood. Yet is it the common mood? Back of it often, just as always in the finer mood, is the sense of failure, of incompleteness, of not fulfilling the purpose, of missing the right mark; and this, in the New Testament sense of the word, is sin. As a new year turns, millions of men possess such a sense of guilty shame because they are not what they might have been, what they ought to be, what once they were, as, undefiled, each lay a

little child in arms that were folded forever long ago. It is the hour for God. He is waiting for this mood. "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight. I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

And God can annul the effects of the past. Not all. There will still often be a price to be paid. But a man will be given grace to pay it manfully, and if a man does this, God's grace can take care of the law of sowing and reaping. It has done this so effectually in the case of some men who could be named—one notable man of our nation especially—that we cannot bring ourselves even to mention these men's names, or to name what was in their past which needed to be canceled, so completely in their lives and in the regard of their fellow-men for them has God enabled them to redeem the past. Not all that was lasts forever past recall. God has access to it even when it is seemingly secure from our recall. He is not shackled as we are by time. What was, has been for us, once for all. But what was *is* for God. All the past and the future are present to Him. The past which we cannot penetrate or retrace, because it is gone, is not gone from God. He has it in His hand, and He can undo the past. Thank God, He can.

And while we cannot go back to annul what is gone, to erase one single line of what is written, God will enable us to undo the consequence of it. All that is in the effect must have been in the cause. But not all that is in any cause needs to come out in the effects. God in Christ can frustrate, divert, overpower streams which pour down out of the past. Some of them can

be turned back, some stopped, some directed to far nobler ends than those for which they set out. For the effects of all wrongdoing we can, in Christ, make restitution, and—what is far more significant—we can let Christ reach back to the wrongdoing, and thwart it by bending its further consequences to good.

And God will enrich the future to atone for the lost opportunities of the past. He will restore the years which the locust has eaten. "You can never be again what you were," said one saddened friend to a boy who had slipped. "No," said another friend, "but you can be now what you never were." This is the right use of the past, and, as Phillips Brooks said, the only way to get rid of a bad past; namely, to get a future out of it.

And, lastly, God will restore the child heart and its joys. It is the loss of the child heart which is the chief penalty for a wrong past. And the recovery of that heart is life's great longing as we go on. "Make me a boy again just for to-night," the man sings. And if only it might be, not for one night, but forever! To have back again what is gone! No selfish desire or longing can work the miracle, but it can be worked. God can work it. It had been worked in Paul, and he saw it worked in multitudes who, "strengthened with all power, according to the might of God's glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy, gave thanks unto the Father who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who delivered them out of the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of his love." God can do this for all of us. We can coöperate with Him, if first of all we are open by faith to the work of profound renewing which the Spirit is ready to work

in us, and then simply and trustfully follow Christ in service. The hints which Alice Freeman Palmer gave some working girls will help us to coöperate as we may.

(1) Memorize something good daily. For us, let it be a word of God.

(2) Look for something pretty daily. For us, let it be the fairest Lord Jesus.

(3) Do something for somebody daily. Don't skip a day. "Inasmuch." "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is thy brother and sister and mother."

So we need not fear the past—with God. We are forward-facing toward a haven where He who is with us also waits for us. This is the Christian miracle of now and then. We need only trim our sails and bend to the great breeze of God.

"My soul is sailing through the sea,
But the Past is heavy and hindereth me.
The Past hath crusted cumbrous shells
That hold the flesh of cold sea-mells
About my soul.
The huge waves wash, the high waves roll,
Each barnacle clingeth and worketh dole,
And hindereth me from sailing.

"Old Past, let go, and drop i' the sea,
Till fathomless waters cover thee,
For I am living, but thou art dead,
Thou drawest back, I strive ahead,
The day to find.
Thy shells unbind! Night comes behind.
I needs must hurry with the wind,
And trim me best for sailing."

4

THE LOVING FORGETFULNESS OF GOD

THE cry of the soul is, "Oh, that I might forget!" That which it has done will not withdraw itself. With some of us perhaps it is the memory of a mistake with a little child. We forgot once the counsel of Froebel, "Be cautious, be careful and thoughtful at this point, O parents. You can here at one blow destroy, at least for a long time, the instinct of formative activity in your children, if you repel their help as childish, useless, of little avail, or even as a hindrance." This was just our mistake. Little hands once sought to help us, and we were impatient and unkind. Over that or some other blunder of ours, little eyes filled with tears and little lips quivered. Those little eyes have been long since closed, and those little lips long since still, and we can neither undo or forget. No, we cannot forget.

And with some of us the memory that will not go away is coarser and more revolting. "The consequence of one act of sin," says the author of *Blanche Lady Falaise,* "can never be revoked. If there be any lesson taught us by my story, it is the deceitfulness of sin and the pitiless insistence by which it exacts its payment to the full. The moment I had absolutely committed that unpardonable sin, life assumed to me an altogether different guise. Side by side with me as I walked there walked another between me and my

wife. As we sat at meat, there sat another, a specter impalpable, ghostly, yet wholly real. In the pulpit as I preached he stood gazing over my shoulder."

The anguish of the Psalmist is the anguish of all hearts.

> "I know my transgressions,
> And my sin is ever before me."

The torment of sin is that we cannot forget. And its punishment is God's remembrance. This was the most terrible warning of the prophet, "Thus saith Jehovah unto this people, Even so have they loved to wander; they have not refrained their feet: therefore Jehovah doth not accept them; now will he remember their iniquity." "And they consider not in their hearts," said Jehovah, "that I remember all their wickedness: now have their own doings beset them about: they are before my face. . . . As for the sacrifices . . . Jehovah accepteth them not: now will he remember their iniquity. . . . They have deeply corrupted themselves: he will remember their iniquity."

God will not forget, and His remembrance will be judgment. And therefore the soul cries out against it. Realizing that it cannot escape the judgment of its own memory, it cries unto God to forget. It is the Psalmist's heart-broken plea:

> "Hide thy face from my sins
> And blot out all mine iniquities. . . .
> Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. . . .
> Remember thou me."

And it is the prophet's prayer: "Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity forever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people."

But of what avail? Can God forget? Not so, says Omar:

> "The Moving Finger writes and, having writ,
> Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

And so say all the faiths except the true. The doctrine of transmigration which is the dominating principle of Buddhism, and of Hinduism, too, is the denial of the forgetfulness of God. Naturalistic psychology, also, can give us no hope. Nothing, it declares, in strict scientific literalness is ever wiped out. What we write, we write, and God may forgive, but He cannot forget.

But God Himself says that He can, and our hearts tell us that if He be God, He must be able to do that without which how could we look upon His face! He will forget. "I, even I," He declares, "am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake: and I will not remember thy sins." It is the loving forgetfulness of God that makes the new heaven and earth in which even now the redeemed of the Lord walk and are at peace. "For behold," says God, "I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity

and their sin will I remember no more." And so that becomes true which poor James Thomson denied could ever be. The good hand of the forgetting God

> "Leads me back
> From this accursed night without a morn,
> And through the deserts which have else no track
> And through vast wastes of horror-haunted time,
> To Eden innocence in Eden's clime.
>
> "And I become a nursling soft and pure,
> An infant cradled on its mother's knee
> Without a past, love-cherished and secure."

The forgetfulness of God blots out our past and gives us back what was, if we will trust Him and lose ourselves in Him.

Oh, we shall remember, we all know that. But we are on such terms with God as though the past had not been. We meet Him without the shame that we must feel if we knew that He was remembering and that as He looked on us, He saw all our past sin. He does not see it. He sees only the perfect beauty and purity of Christ in whom we are, and for His sake. He has blotted out our transgressions and remembers not our sin. "Fear not," He says, "for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou"—this is His promise, that we too shall forget—"thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth." "Their sins and their iniquities," quotes the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "will I remember no more," and then he adds, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near." The forgetfulness of God makes us bold to go

where we could not bear to stand under the shame of our remembered sins.

And God dares forget. The mightiness of His love makes Him dare. And no limitation annuls His power. A blind boy took the examination for admission to one of our great universities. His father sat beside him and wrote the papers at his dictation. Occasionally the father, in his scrupulous honesty, asked the boy to spell the harder words, and when he spelled them inaccurately the father wrote down the inaccuracy. All the errors were faithfully recorded. The father said it was one of the hardest ordeals of his life, to be the recorder of his boy's blunders and mistakes. He dared not do otherwise. But in Christ God dares. "The Moving Finger writes." And the love of God blots what it wrote. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son which makes us clean washes away the very record and remembrance of our sin.

Ought not we, to whom life becomes endurable through our remembrance of the generous forgetfulness of God, endeavour by His Spirit to enter into His ways? Others have wronged us. Perhaps the wrong was long years ago. It may be that we knew it at the time and have brooded over it all the years. It may be that we have only now discovered it, and day and night we think upon it, and cannot forget. But if God forgives and forgets our transgressions, we ought to forgive and forget our brother's transgression. The children of the Father will dare with the Father to forget, and will be given grace of their Father to do what they are ready to dare.

And the pang and sorrow of the wrong done us God will remember, and will heal as we forget the sin of others that caused it. This is sweet. And He, the

good and loving One, who is all tenderness and compassion, will forget our sin, and will not remember the pang and sorrow it brought to Him. It is very wonderful, but it is true.

"Now have I won a marvel and a truth;"
So spake the Soul and trembled. "Dread and ruth
Together mixed; for I did sin of yore;
But this (so said I oft) was long ago—
So put it from me far away; but lo!
With Thee is neither After nor Before,
O Lord, and clear within the noonlight set
Of one illimitable Present, yet
Thou lookest on my fault as it were now.
So will I mourn and humble me; yet Thou
Art not as man, that oft forgives a wrong
Because he half forgets it, Time being strong
To wear the crimson of guilt's stain away—
For Thou, forgiving, dost so in a Day
That shows it clearest—in the boundless sea
Of Mercy and Atonement, utterly
Casting our pardoned trespasses behind,
No more remembered, or to come to mind—
Set wide from us as East from West away."

5

A HEART FOR LONELINESS

EVERY heart knows its own sorrow. At bottom each soul stands alone. The corporate view of society and the Church is true in part, but in part it must make room for the view, equally true, that no man can be submerged in the mass of men, that each must live his own life, see his own visions, fulfill his own time, and stand bare and personal before God.

With characteristic faithfulness to the facts of life, Paul combined in his doctrine and in his experience these two truths. "Bear ye one another's burdens" is his one injunction. It is the word of the corporate life on which he laid constant emphasis. The faith of Christian men was, in his view, a faith toward other men as well as a faith toward God. He praises Philemon's faith as a faith not toward the Lord Jesus only but also toward all the saints. "We are members one of another," he says. We are one body with Christ by faith, and by faith we are one body in Christ. "Paul's mystical conception," as Matthew Arnold says, "is not complete without its relations of us to our fellow-men, as well as its relation of us to Jesus Christ. . . . Jesus Christ's life, with which we by faith identify ourselves, is not complete, His aspiration after the eternal order is not satisfied, so long as only Jesus Himself follows this order, or only this or that individual amongst us men follows it." The

Christian life stands not in individual identity with Christ alone, but in the "real communion of saints," the fellowship of faith, the love in faith, the household of faith, that mystical relationship of severed hearts by which in the unity of the faith they are some day to be complete in the stature of the fulness of Christ. "The heart of Paul's social doctrine was faith, and all our deepest speculations as to society, its constitution, its destiny, are far short of the noble conception which he strove to realize on earth. By faith he had lost and found his life in Christ. By faith he lost and found it also in men." No man stands alone. We are all part of others. And the teacher of men must be so above his fellows. "St. Chrysostom," said Atterbury, "as great a lover and recommender of the solitary state as he was, declared it to be no proper school for those who are to be leaders of Christ's flock."

Yet Paul knew that no life could be lived in the herd; that each character is a character apart; that, though we are one body, yet the body has many members, and all the members have not the same office; that, though it is one Spirit, His operations are as diverse as the wealth of the thoughts of God. "Let each man bear his own burdens." It is the word of the lonely life. Separate from every other, we come into the world one by one. One by one we go through it, bearing our own burdens, the more resolutely as we are strong and true, crying for no pity. It was said of Robertson of Brighton: "He did not seek for sympathy. He was accustomed, as he said, to consume his own smoke."

"For the race is run one by one, and never by two and two."

And at the end we stand up for our judgment, each to give his own account of his own deeds, and to receive his own reward.

"Oh! none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest and kin,
Though borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within.
. . . . . .
For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one by one."

Every great preacher and leader of men lives in the terribly vivid consciousness of this loneliness of life. And he is the greatest leader who combines the most vital sense of it with an equally vital sense of the mystical corporateness of life. The power of this antinomy abode in the secret soul of Paul.

Paul's spiritual authority took on great dominion from his consciousness of an aloof and lonely mission. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. All the other apostles he regarded as, in a sense, of one party; he stood alone. For a while Barnabas stood beside him, and their paths coalesced, but the divergent solitude of his business on the earth tore them apart, and the sense of his isolation ever abode with him, and sobbed as an undertone in all the utterances of his soul. Whether he is asserting his authority where it has not been questioned, or is defending it against assault or disrespect; whether he is giving voice to his consciousness of confident possession of unusual grace, or challenging men to scrutinize and imitate him as he studied and followed Christ, or, Moses-like, setting himself forth as the foster-father of his people and the prophet ready to give his soul for Israel, or acknowledging the

ostracism, the abasement, the self-depression, of his mission—we see his face wet with the tears of his loneliness, and are aware of him as one treading the wine-press alone. Christ was all to him. As for man, he knew no man after the flesh. He walked in the solitude of the serving soul.

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you.
Aye, for me too He greatly hath sufficed.
Lo, with no winning words I would entice you,—
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

"Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water,
Pass I in patience till the work be done."

Of the life of Paul as we are given to see it, this is no mere poet's picture. He was a lonely and solitary man. Farrar contends that he was a widower, on the ground that only married men were eligible to the Sanhedrin, and that Paul's remark about having given his vote in favour of the death of some Christians shows him to have been a member. But, whether he had had a home once or not, he had none from the day we first see him guarding the garments of Stephen's murderers. He was a wanderer upon the earth, with no continuing city, without the cares and without the comfort of a home. It is not surprising that lesser men, without the great sanity and balance of the apostle, should attempt to follow him here, and err.

He was a solitary man, but it was not with artificial, ascetic, self-centered loneliness. He was lonely in his absorption in Christ alone, having died to the world. He was lonely in his terrible sense of sin. He was

lonely in the rough hardship and physical sufferings of his work, not chosen for their own sake, but endured as part of his ministry. He waged a solitary battle against sin in his own will. He would belong to no faction, or tolerate no partisanship, and whoever takes this position is always solitary. He found almost none who served God wholly, and who cared for Christ alone. When he wrote to the Philippians, Timothy was the only genuine missionary he had. The rest sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. He walked in a world and among believers who alike made him feel how separate he was, and how solitary his view of Christ and of life. And constantly he felt the awful, almost despairing, down-pull which all feel who try to teach the truth of God to man and find the mind of man sealed and unresponsive to the unseen. And this flung him into a sense of singularity and utter lonesomeness. Paul's greatness separated him.

Yet, in a sense, Paul's isolation was the cause of his unique power. "The soul," said Robertson, "collects its mightiest power by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the moral and mental character marvellously." It was into the solitude of Arabia—whether the desert of Sinai, or the country east of Damascus, which was at the time subject to the king of Arabia Petræa, is of no consequence—that Paul passed after the dazing revolution on the Damascus road, and there in the stillness the great solidifying of new character was made, and the new establishing of his life in God. In the desert mornings the new intercourse began.

"God with sweet strength, with terror and with trancing,
Spake in the purple mystery of dawn.

" Oh, what a speech and greater than our learning!
Scarcely remembrance can the joy renew;
What were they, then, the sights of our discerning,
Sorrows we suffer and the deeds we do.

" Lo, every one of them was sunk and swallowed,
Morsels and motes, in the eternal sea;
Far was the call, and farther, as I followed,
Grew there a silence round the Lord and me."

And not in the desert alone was Paul wrapped round in this silence with the Lord. He had a great experience which he never dared to describe, which was only representative of the constant deep life hid with Christ in God. It was the hidden region out of which the streams of power poured. The iceberg or the vessel on the ocean stands steadiest that runs base or keel deepest beneath the seas. A life without an undernote is like a picture without a background, or a cymbal clanging.

The wilderness is the place of calm. The desert stretches out under the sun, the bare rocks are its only church, and the purple tremor of the hot air its only liturgy. Pantheism and polytheism die in the desert. The monotheistic faiths were born there, and only they can live in the naked scrutiny of the eyes of the only God. And into the desert with God alone every soul ought daily to go to bathe in His pure deity, yet to stand out distinct in His presence, and to realize there, in the stillness of God and the Spirit, how free we are, and how bound. There we understand, as Marcus Aurelius says, that " things cannot disturb the soul." Whoever has been there, and keeps open the way thither, has learned Paul's secret of contentment in the deliverance from things.

Cowper may ask:

> "O Solitude, where are the charms
> Which sages have seen in thy face?"

but they are known to all who have walked alone with God. "In true silence," says John Woolman in his *Journal,* "strength is renewed, and the mind is weaned from all things, save as they may be enjoyed in the divine will; and a lowliness in outward living, opposite to worldly honour, becomes truly acceptable to us. In the desire after outward gain the mind is prevented from a perfect attention to the voice of Christ; yet, being weaned from all things, except as they may be enjoyed in the divine will, the pure light shines into the soul. Where the fruits of the spirit which is of this world are brought forth by many who profess to be led by the spirit of truth, and cloudiness is felt to be gathering over the visible Church, the sincere in heart, who abide in true stillness, and are exercised thereon before the Lord for His name's sake, have knowledge of Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings; and inward thankfulness is felt at times that through divine love our own wisdom is cast out, and that forward, active part in us is subjected, which would rise and do something without the pure leadings of the spirit of Christ."

The sense and endurance of his loneliness is the test of the great and sincere soul. Are we afraid or reluctant to be alone? Must we ever be busy with some outer duty which obscures the personal spirit? "It may be laid down as a position which will seldom deceive," says Dr. S. Johnson, "that when a man cannot bear his own company there is something wrong."

"Solitude," says Mr. Lowell, "is as needful to the imagination as society is wholesome for the character." The reticence of God is His eternal fascination to us, His self-completeness the ground of our trust. Our shallow lives lie open to the public's gaze. We turn to Him as more than He appears, the infinite integrity because the infinite self-companion. We lean on "I am that I am," the God who is God alone and fearless to be solitary. We need to enter into His lonesomeness, and learn there to share His absolute self-consistency and freedom from our own fear.

Let the solitary heart be glad, and the lonely know that their loneliness is life. Out of the secret communion alone can souls speak to souls. All true human intercourse is deep calling unto deep, the voice of the solitary spirit crying across the desert till it find a friend.

II. THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

1. *Paul's View of the Core of Things.*
2. *Doing Right Because It Is Right.*
3. *Sons of the Day.*
4. *Cultivating a Distaste for Praise.*
5. *The Teachings of Judas Iscariot.*

1

PAUL'S VIEW OF THE CORE OF THINGS

THE core of Christian things in Paul's view was not Christian doctrine, nor Christian ethics, nor Christian feeling. Neither was it the body of facts with which Christian doctrine deals, on which Christian ethics rests and from which Christian feeling springs. A certain fashion of thought contends that the facts are the core of the Gospel, and surely, as a prominent theologian has said, if it were necessary to distinguish between the facts and, for example, the doctrine of Christianity, "there is none who would not find the essence of Christianity in the facts. The fact of the incarnation, the atonement, the heavenly high-priesthood—here undoubtedly is the centre of Christianity, about which its doctrines revolve. And if it were possible not merely to distinguish between them, but to separate the doctrine from the facts, then of course it would be to the facts alone that we could flee." And the ethics and the feeling are so related to the facts as to make the facts and the true theory of them primary and supreme. Though the world were pagan in its acts and emotions, the Christian facts and doctrine would remain, and without the facts there can be no Christian living and no Christian loving.

But the core of things is not the body of facts. It is the truth embedded in the facts, the living contact of God with man through the facts in the limits of space and time. As in biology, the central thing is

not the theory of life, nor the functions of life, nor the conscious joy of life, nor yet the fact of life thus described and used, but life itself, the truth beneath the statement, the activity, the gladness, so in Christianity, according to Paul, the fundamental thing is something behind dogma, deed and delight. It is God in the soul, the soul in God—not independent of the facts and truth of the Gospel, but through them and in them. As the theologian quoted above has said:

"It is true that Christianity is a life, the life that is lived in communion with the Son of God, the life that is hid with Christ in God, the life of which it must be said that it is not we that live it, but Christ that lives it in us. The whole series of Christian facts, the whole body of Christian doctrines, do exist only in order to this life. Christ did not come into the world, die and rise again, merely that He might insert so many marvellous facts into the dull course of natural history; the constitution of the facts, the beautifying of the historical sequence, was not the end of His action; it was to save the souls of men, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. And no single Christian doctrine has been revealed to men merely as a tenet in philosophy, to make them wise; each and every one is sent to them as a piece of glad tidings, that they may be made wise unto salvation. Yet though all Christian knowledge is thus only in order to life, and terminates on life, it is not in the power of all knowledge to give life. We live by the power of the Son of God, by virtue of a vital relation of our souls to Him; and it is only because of the indwelling of the Spirit of God in our hearts that our ears are open to the truth, or that our souls are amenable to its discipline. This Christian life that we live is not the creation of the doctrines or of the facts of

Christianity; it is the working of the Spirit of God, who, abiding within us, becomes to us a second and higher self. These are the fundamental elements of the Gospel of Christ."

"Christ in me. I in Christ"—these were the great and central thoughts to Paul. "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). And "In Christ" is almost the most familiar phrase in his epistles. "I say the truth in Christ" (1 Cor. 4: 17). "We are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12: 5). He speaks of his "ways which be in Christ" (2 Cor. 12: 2). The core of things was in Christ and Christ within. "Our need," says George Bowen, "is not so much of something that He can give us of Himself. We find our strength, our wisdom, our righteousness in Him. . . . Nothing in heaven or in earth should possess loveliness or excellence in the eyes of the believer until he is able to see it in Christ. . . . Jesus Christ is not the enemy of art or nature—He is not the enemy of anything truly excellent or beautiful; all that is truly estimable or lovely owes its existence to Him. All things were made by Him and for Him."

This view of the supremacy of the indwelling life of God involved, it did not exclude, the necessity of Christian faith in the great facts and truths of Christianity. All this Paul assumed. But this assumed, his emphasis was all on the inner thing. "Christianity," said Robertson of Brighton, describing his own message, "as the teachers should, works from the inward to the outward, and not vice versa." Those modern teachers who begin with the environment, with the social product, are unphilosophical. At times there

seems to be reason for their view. It is the view on which Islam proceeds; and Father Phelan reproves Protestantism because it fails to accept it and act upon it. "While a study of dogma," he says, "may bring a few highly cultured minds to accept this or that form of belief, the masses must be drawn by the cords of Adam." And Islam cares little about what is inward provided only men externally conform. Or what motives lead one generation to embrace Islam is a matter of indifference. The faith of the next generation will be solidly enough grounded. But this was not the Pauline method. The new religion with him was not a matter of clothes or circumcision, but of character and communion.

This was his method of reform and righteousness. No external constraints would recreate or subdue men. "Fifteen hundred young men," said President Eliot in his essay, *Liberty in Education,* "living in buildings whose doors stand open night and day, or in scattered lodging houses, cannot be mechanically protected from temptation at the university any more than at the homes from which they came. This protection must be within them. They must find it in memory of home, in pure companionship, in hard work, in intellectual ambition, religious sentiment and moral purpose." Paul knew this well. It was he who took up this idea of Christ's and lodged it in men's thought. We are saved by the life of Christ in us. The real end of faith is that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies.

Some outer performance or ritual or mutilation too often seems to men the essential thing. A Salvation Army officer in the Argentine writes to General Booth, resigning from the Army:

" The Lord Jesus leads me forth to follow Him as an outcast and a tramp. I go without a cent in my pocket. My home will be the same as the Master's—the King's highway and the Father's heart. My rest at night the poor man's hut or the open, as they were the Master's. But I go out in His name, and in His strength.

" ' Christ the Lord has sent me
Through the midnight lands;
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the pierced hands.'

" Moreover, the Lord calls me to raise up unto Himself an army of 144,000 tramp apostles like myself, willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, that would as soon think of burdening their warfare with home, wife and children, as you would of getting drunk; men of God who have taken their stand with the Lamb on the mountain of Holiness, and in whose mouths no guile was found. Our Rules and Regulations you will find in chapter 10 of Matthew. Our Sacraments the cold and the heat, the hunger and the thirst, the weariness of the lonely tramp and the loneliness of Him who had not where to lay His head; our uniform the tramp's ' coat of many colours.'

"And now listen, O general of the Salvation Army. I lift up my hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth forever that I shall fight it out to a finish on these lines. And when you see men and the sons and brethren whom the Lord will raise up unto Himself by His Spirit go into ' cosily furnished quarters ' and ' snug homes,' then you can write over our work what you ought to write over your headquarters and hat-bands; namely, ' Ichabod.' I call on you, General, your officers and soldiers, and all other Christians, Come out and follow me, even as I follow the Master,

on the wallaby track, according to the royal law of the apostle; forth to the conquest of the world for Jesus."

To the new covenant of devotion he adds: "As an outward sign that I accept this Viking-law of the Kingdom, I will have cut in my forehead the mark or sign of the Cross." But love, says Paul, is worth far more than giving one's body to be cut or burned. The heart of things is not on the wallaby track, but within.

Paul's view was never on things. They were secondary, and would be taken care of by the spirit if the spirit was right. The unseen was the eternal. All things he counted but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He sought people, not their possessions. And his law of character was not so much "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, do these things," but "think on these things." As men thought, they would be; and what interested Paul was to get in the heart of life, the new principle planted. Once that end was secured, Paul was assured of the result.

The principle of a right life in the soul—this was the end of Paul's effort. The wisest man in the world needed this—the great life of Christ planted in him. And the humblest man in the world was capable of as much. This was the supreme issue. It was not a question of ethical code or analysis. As Ruskin says in *Stones of Venice:*

"In the early ages of Christianity there was little care taken to analyze character. One momentous

question was heard over the whole world: Dost thou believe in the Lord with all thine heart? There was but one division among men, the great unatonable division between disciple and adversary. The love of Christ was all, and in all; and, in proportion to the nearness of their memory of His person and teaching, men understood the infinity of the requirements of the moral law and the manner in which it alone could be fulfilled. The early Christians felt that virtue, like sin, was a subtle, universal thing, entering into every act and thought, appearing outwardly in ten thousand diverse ways—diverse according to the separate framework of every heart in which it dwelt, but one and the same always in its proceeding from the love of God, as sin is one and the same proceeding from hatred of God. And in their pure, early and practical piety they saw that there was no need for codes of morality or systems of metaphysics. Their virtue comprehended everything, entered into everything; it was too vast and too spiritual to be defined, but there was no need of its definition. For through faith, working by love, they knew that all human excellence would be developed in due order, but that without faith neither reason could define, nor effort reach, the lowest phase of Christian virtue. And, therefore, when any of the apostles have occasion to describe or enumerate any forms of vice or virtue by name there is no attempt at system in their words. They use them hurriedly and energetically, heaping the thoughts one upon another in order as far as possible to fill the reader's mind with a sense of the infinity both of crime and of righteousness. Hear Paul describe sin: 'Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant

breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.' There is evidently here an intense feeling of the universality of sin, and in order to express it the apostle hurries his words confusedly together, little caring about their order, as knowing all the vices to be indissolubly connected one with another. It would be utterly vain to endeavour to arrange his expressions as if they had been intended for the ground of any system, or to give any philosophical definition of the vices. So also hear him speaking of virtue: ' Rejoice in the Lord. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Be careful for nothing, but in everything let your requests be known unto God; and whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' Observe, he gives up all attempt at definition; he leaves the definition to every man's heart, though he writes so as to mark the overflowing fulness of his own vision of virtue. . . . And all early Christians taught in the same manner. They never cared to expound the nature of this or that virtue, for they knew that the believer who had Christ had all. Did he need fortitude? Christ was his rock. Equity? Christ was his righteousness. Holiness? Christ was his sanctification. Liberty? Christ was his redemption. Temperance? Christ was his ruler. Wisdom? Christ was his light. Truthfulness? Christ was the truth. Charity? Christ was love."

We may rest our hearts here. We are not delivered from the intellectual problems of our time by this simple faith. But however perplexed we may be by them, we may return thither. This is the core of things. And we know the Son of God.

2

DOING RIGHT BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT

DOING right because it is right, and for the sake of the God of right alone, is the only right rule of life. It was the glory of Christ's life that it was a life of perfect right-doing. He perfectly fulfilled all righteousness. He could say of His life before God: "I do always those things that are pleasing to him." By His perfect right-doing He proved to men His participation in the divine nature, which is Right. "The very works that I do," He declared, "bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." Our Lord did only what was right, and He showed Himself to be the Son of God by the way He infallibly discovered and unfailingly did that which was perfectly right.

This must be our fundamental law. It is right to ask advice of others, to consider their views, to measure the consequences of different courses of action. We should leave no means of inquiry or investigation unused in order to be sure of what is right. But, once we have found it, we are to do it just because it is right, not because of what others say about it, or because of what its consequences may be. Friends may counsel against our folly. They did in the case of Christ. The consequences of what we do may be disastrous. They were in Jesus' case. But all of this is of no significance whatever. What is right? That is all we need to ask. The right thing is the only thing to be considered.

"'If it is right, there is no other way!'
Brave words to speak, and braver still to live;
A flag to guide the battle of each day,
A motto that will peace and courage give.

"'If it is right, there is no other way!'
Wise words that clear the tangles from the brain;
Pleasure may whisper, doubt may urge delay,
And self may argue, but it speaks in vain.

"'If it is right, there is no other way!'
This is the voice of God, the call of truth;
Happy the man who hears it to obey,
And follows upward, onward, from his youth."

"I can't be sure as to what is right," some say. But that is the widest possible error. "The word is very nigh unto thee," is true of all duty. Some right deed is never out of sight of each one of us. However much there may be doubtful, there is within the field of vision of every soul at least one unmistakably right thing. If we will do that, other things will appear in God's own order. The thing which God has set for us as the right thing is never far off. "It is not in heaven," God says to us as He said of old, "that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear of it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

To this law of life, right as right, to be done because it is right, we must cling as the one supreme law. What the public says or thinks is of no consequence to us.

The public's opinion in favour or tolerance of any course of action does not make it right if it is not right. In a recent suit against a great corporation for alleged wrong acts, a sales agent of the corporation told the prosecuting attorney that he thought the company which he represented had carried on business "in an ethical way."

"Do you think it was ethical to run sham companies with dummy directors in order to mislead the people as to the true character of the business?" asked the attorney.

The agent said that he did not believe that the company had done so.

"Well," persisted the attorney, "do you believe that it was ethical to use false gauges in measuring up competitive shipments?"

The agent made no direct reply.

"Well, do you believe that it was ethical to bribe railroad employees to give secret information?"

"I don't think that the company did that," the agent repeated; and finally he gave this definition of the word "ethical" as he had used it: "I think," said he, "that if many other business men did business in that way, and if there was no public outcry against it, that would be ethical."

On that basis, what is "ethical" is not necessarily right. For that is right which God approves and which is in harmony with the character of God; and often this is something very different from that which business men allow, and against which there is no public outcry. Right demands to be done, whatever men may deem "ethical." The "ethical" men may sneer at it and call it "Puritanical," but if it is right, then it is to be done in the face of whatever opposes it.

The bitterness of the consequences is to be no deterrent. This is a moral universe, and nothing turns out well but that which is right; yet for a time the right may seem to be turning out very ill. Our Lord did right, and was crucified. Through all the ages men have done right, and have been in the minority for it. Even if temporal adversity and suffering follow right-doing, right is to be done. Some time ago a correspondent of a religious weekly wrote that he had adopted tithe-giving, in the conviction that it was an eternal, unrepealed and unrepealable principle, and he added that he held to this conviction in spite of the fact that business reverses and family sickness had combined, *since he began tithing*, to make his financial condition far worse than it had ever been before. A New York reader was so impressed by this view that in consequence he decided to begin to use the tithing system. "That letter," he said, "was more inspiring than ten letters showing an increase of temporal prosperity." The sight of men doing right because it is right, regardless of its cost, is the most exhilarating sight in the world.

Some people will be pretty sure to be offended if we do right ever and invariably as a law of life. The devil will be deeply offended. He never does right for right's sake, and he does not like to see people doing it. And often a bank president or a tradesman or a minister or any other man will have to do right in the face of some friend's wish that he do wrong. But it is far better to give such offense than to affront God and imperil our own souls by denying God, as we must deny Him in rejecting the right. Sometimes the inducement to do wrong will be overwhelming, but the offer is fraudulent. It cannot pay not to do right.

If it pays financially, we shall have to make up for it in other ways that will be extortionate. We may gain the whole world, but the chances are that we shall do nothing of the sort; and if we do gain the whole world, we shall lose our own souls.

"His name was Tesson," says Mr. Alexander F. Irvine, in one of his life stories; "he was a carpenter with a career. I met him in a sort of underground dugout in Cherbourg a few years ago. When Jean Francois Millet left the old farm at Gruchy, and began his career as an artist, he entered the studio of an artist in Cherbourg. He wanted canvas stretched, of course, and Tesson, the carpenter, was called in. Of all the artists Tesson ever worked for, this one seemed the most hopeless. Tesson chuckled to himself as he reached the street with his first order. 'To think that that clodhopper, with his calico shirt and wooden shoes, imagines he can paint!' Tesson compared himself with Millet—much to the latter's disadvantage. Tesson wore white linen and leather shoes. He had been to school and was proud of his success there. He felt himself to be the intellectual superior of Millet—indeed, superior in every way. 'If the universe was operated in decent order,' he said to himself, 'the clodhopper would be making canvases for me!'

"One day he got paints, brushes and canvas, and in a quiet corner of his workshop began to paint. His efforts covered nearly a year. He had watched Millet, and perhaps unconsciously had carried away something of his style. Anyway, one day a friend saw a lot of sketches on Tesson's bench and at once said, 'Ah, so you've got some of Millet's pictures here!' 'No,' said Tesson, 'they are my own.' 'Well,' said his friend, 'all I know is that they are just like his,

and just as good, and if you are hard up at any time you can sign his name on them and get a neat sum, for they say the big clodhopper is to be a genius.'

" Tesson had spent much time on his new vocation. He had almost entirely given up carpentering. He was hard up and needed money. One day, when the pinch of hunger came, he signed ' J. F. Millet ' on three pictures and sold them to Baron De Tocqueville.

" Tesson was convicted and thrown into jail.

" Meantime the ' clodhopper ' had gone to Paris, then to Barbizon, where he blazed a pathway all his own in the world of art. A peasant he was born, and a peasant he remained. When Tesson came out of jail he took up his trade again, but the public didn't want his work. He was known as a ' fake artist,' and throughout the years he struggled to get a foothold, but in vain. Again he turned to canvas, and when I saw him he was painting little marine views, which he sold to travellers for a franc apiece.

" There were tears in his eyes when he told me of the struggle he had the day he signed Millet's name. ' I needed bread,' he said, ' but I could have waited. I painted the name Millet out ten or more times. Every time I blotted it out and signed my own—so I went on painting in and painting out his name and my own. I think I must have struggled for a whole day, but at last his name remained and I got my bread; but, O God! if the world could ever know the hunger of heart and soul I have suffered for thirty-five years! '

" ' Why didn't you go away from Cherbourg? ' I asked.

" ' I did once,' he said. ' I went to Paris but I could not get away from myself! '

" He took another picture from the drawer. It was

a copper plate—he had spent several years on it—a scratch now and a scratch again. It was a picture of a shop, a man stood in the middle of the floor. He seemed in doubt or in indecision. Outside the fast-closed door stood an angel with a wand. There was an atmosphere of mystery in it. He watched my face as I scanned it.

"'What does it mean?' I asked him.

"'The angel came once,' he said, 'and the door was shut! It has been open ever since, but she returns not.'"

Peace and power are with the life lived in loyalty to the right for its own sake. That life is above all vacillation and whimsical mood. It has a pole-star. And the life of right-doing is not only the life of rest, the life which needs no scheming and leaves no regrets, it is also the abundant life, the life of joy and delight. New things are ever coming into it, and they are free from every taint and thorn.

If any are harassed and confused, let them pause and think. There is One who is steady and unmoved. He is the God of Right. Let us rise up into His immovable steadfastness simply by doing, by His grace and at His word, what is right, only what is right.

3

SONS OF THE DAY

IN all ages of the world the instinctive noble preference of the soul has been for light. The primitive peoples worshipped the sun, and forms of the early sun worship still survive in many of the world religions. In the dark, civilized men have kept a light burning, and in the dark, savages without a light have made worship toward the moon.

There have been various reasons for all this light-worship, but beneath all other reasons we see in it a tremendous moral lesson. All true preference for light as against darkness is a sign of the moral precedence of light, a foretoken of what we sing in the marching hymn:

> "We come in the might of the Lord of Light
> With armour bright to meet Him,
> And we put to flight the armies of night,
> That the sons of the day may greet Him."

It is of light in this deep moral sense that the Bible is full. God Himself is described there as light. In Him is no darkness at all. He covereth Himself with light as with a curtain. "Jehovah," says the Psalmist, "is my light and my salvation." "Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Christ came as the light of the world, and the supreme exaltation of His life, next to the enthronement of the

cross, was a transfiguration of light. The Gospel was an illumination: "It is God that said, Light shall shine out of the darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Heaven itself is to be the perfect day, for "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And there shall be night no more."

In the blaze of this background of light we see the significance of our calling as sons not of darkness, but of the day. How full the New Testament is of the conception and of the appeal to Christians on the basis of it! "The night is far spent," writes Paul to the Romans, "and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day." And to the Colossians he speaks of the Father as Him "who made us meet to be the partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love," "who," as Peter writes, "called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

And what is it, turned into every-day life and speech, to be a child of light, a son of the day?

It is to be a lover of openness. Evil seeks darkness and its concealment. A schoolboy who ran away from one of our best-known schools left behind him on the wall, among other revelations of his character, a set of school rules which he had altered, by erasures and additions, so that the rule regarding photographing which had read, "Work connected with the development of pictures must be done in the dark room,"

read in his amended form, "Work connected with the devil must be done in the dark." "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, but his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God." To which class do we belong? Do we seek the day or the night? What is our instinctive movement when surprised? Is it one of concealment or exposure? The son of the day seeks light. To turn light on him causes no hurried movement of concealment. It makes him look up with a smile.

To be a son of the day is to be a purist about money, both as to the way it is obtained and as to the way it is spent. In his sermon on "The Choice Young Man," Phillips Brooks describes the attitude of a son of the day toward getting money. "Plentiful as those vices are among us," says he of certain common sins which seek to hide themselves, "they still have in some degree the grace to recognize their own disgracefulness by the way in which they conceal themselves. Some sort of hiding and disguise they take instinctively. Let even that help to open our eyes to what they really are. To keep clear of concealment, to keep clear of the need of concealment, to do nothing which he might not do out in the middle of Boston Common at noonday—I cannot say how more and more that seems to me to be the glory of a young man's life. It is an awful hour when the first necessity of hiding anything comes. The whole life is different henceforth; when there are questions to be feared, and eyes to be avoided, and subjects which must not be touched, then the bloom of life is gone. Put off that day as long as possible. Put it off for-

ever if you can, and you will hold no truth for which you cannot find a reason; so let yourself be possessed of no dollar whose history you do not dare to tell." This is on the side of acquisition. But just as truly on the side of expenditure must we be the children of the Light. What we buy we must buy in the sunlight.

And the son of the day will be a man of daylight joys. Paul abhorred the nighttime indulgences, "revelling and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness." How much more helpful are the day joys! The best sports are impossible in the dark. When the light fades the best game is called until the light of a new day comes. We have a good test of men here. Are their favourite pleasures nighttime or daytime pleasures? The son of the day likes best to play in the sun.

And deeper yet, the son of the day will be a doer of daylight deeds, and a thinker of daylight thoughts. He will not do secretly what openly he denies doing. He will not bisect his personality or his identity, and do officially what he declares personally that he never did. He will not write one thing and say another. If he feels justified in criticising any one he will not hesitate to say who it is that he is criticising. He will say nothing behind a man's back that he is not as ready to say to his face. Light and candour will be the path of his feet and a couch within his dwelling. And day will cover his acts and his words because day floods his mind and his thoughts, all pure and fearless and sunlit.

Let us look straight and personally at the matter. Am I a son of the day? Why should I be a son of the day?

Sons of the day are unafraid of the past; there is

nothing in it whose reappearance they dread. They are unafraid of the present; they walk in light, and not in that peopled night of which Lanier sings, filled with

> "The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
> Under the waters of sleep."

And they are unafraid of the future, because while

> "The way of the wicked is as darkness,
> They know not at what they stumble.
> The path of righteousness is as the dawning light,
> That shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Sons of the day are strong. To be of the light is to be at vantage over all that is in darkness, and it is to be in the position of helpfulness toward all that may be in need. The most secure and powerful of all personalities was He who called Himself the Light of the World. And it was as lights that His followers were sent to give aid to others. If they be not children of light, it will fare ill with them in the effort to walk without stumbling, or to guide those who are in any need. The only greatness of character or of service is the greatness of white daylight.

Sons of the day are in the way of finding truth and character. "With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." "Again therefore Jesus spoke, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Many of the children of the light have illustrated the glorious reward of sun-bathed character. Of Chinese Gordon, the boy Capsune whom he rescued

from slavery asked the lady who had charge of him whether Gordon still had his blue eyes, and did she think he could "see all through me now?" Another day he said he was "quite sure Gordon Pasha could see quite well in the dark because he had the light inside of him."

Shall we not choose to be sons of the day, the true children of the Father of Light, with whom is no shadow, men of the radiant face looking to God and lightened, walking in the light as He is in the light?

"I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright.
I looked to Jesus, and I found in Him my Star, my Sun,
And in that light of life I'll walk, till travelling days are done."

4

CULTIVATING A DISTASTE FOR PRAISE

PRAISE is a good thing to give and a poor thing to desire. There are men whose principle of action is never to refuse a favour if it is possible to grant it, and never to ask a favour under any circumstances at all. The same rule holds good in the matter of praise. Often we can hearten a discouraged man by a word of praise or lead one who has done well to do vastly better by a warm and cordial word of appreciation. In dealing with people as they are and in such a world as ours, praise fills a large place. But it ought to be the ambition of every man to get beyond the point where praise is necessary for him, to become so clear and steadfast in his principles, so firm and efficient in his performance of duty, so sure in his own conscience, that to him praise is distasteful.

To be desirous of praise is a sign of weakness. Some men are consumed with this desire, or are completely dependent upon expressed appreciation for moral sustenance in their work. They subscribe to news-clipping agencies to see what the papers say about them. They fish for expressions of opinion about their performances. They like to overhear commendatory conversation about their achievements or utterances. With some the weakness becomes positive vanity. With others it retains a more amiable form, making its possessor dependent upon praise for his own peace of mind and happiness in work. Un-

less he knows that other people are pleased with him and speak well of him, he is cast down and uncertain as to his efficiency and success.

Now, our Lord would not have us press His word of warning on this subject to untrue exaggeration. "Woe unto you," said He, "when all men shall speak well of you." But He Himself rejoiced in Simon Peter's great confession, which was a noble speaking well of Jesus. He gathered about Him a group of men whose life mission it was to be to speak well of Him, and He recognized the supreme beauty of friendship-love, with its perfect regard and confidence. Jesus would not approve the spirit of the martyrdom-seeker, who makes himself unpleasant to every one, and then rejoices in his unpopularity as a proof of his loyalty to the Gospel. The men who were loyal to the Gospel in Paul's day were men whose praise was in all the churches. And Paul himself coveted the good-will and regard of all men.

But Paul himself declared that it was a small matter to him, after all, what men thought of him. Each man was to stand or fall to his own Master. Paul stood to his. "With me," said he, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." And he expected others to live not as in the view of men, but as unto God. Servants were to do their work, not with a view to pleasing men, but with an eye single to God, and were to put the divine loyalty into all their serving.

The Bible idea throughout is the idea of fidelity to the call of God, of simple conscientiousness in duty. Even when a man has done this, he is an unprofitable servant. And yet this is the least and most that he can do. Doing it is all the reward that any man ever

needs. It is as Fielding says in *Tom Thumb the Great:*

> "When I'm not thank'd at all, I'm thank'd enough;
> I've done my duty, and I've done no more."

Even in the best service the doer of it knows that there is imperfection enough, and shrinks from any laudation for that which he knows, even if there were no perfection in it, is only what he ought to have done.

In duty-doing, we do not deserve any of the credit for what is done. When we really succeed in doing any good piece of work, we may pride ourselves upon our having done it; but we must remember that, if there was any real good in it, that was of God, and God deserves all the praise for it. Chinese Gordon held this conviction so thoroughly that men called him a fatalist, and he did not in the least shrink from the charge.

"It is a delightful thing to be a fatalist," he wrote, "not as that word is generally employed, but to accept that, *when things happen,* and not before, God has for some wise reason so ordained them: *all* things, not only the great things, but all the circumstances of life—that is what to me is meant by the words, 'Ye are dead.'" Again: "We have nothing further to do, when the scroll of events is unrolled, than to accept them as being for the best; but, *before it is unrolled* it is another matter, for you would not say, 'I sat still and let things happen.' With this belief all I can say is, that amidst troubles and worries no one can have peace till he thus stays upon his God—*that* gives a superhuman strength." Perhaps we are unable to rise to Gordon's massive trust in God; but the farther we

are from it, the more sure we may be that in us dwelleth no good, and that we never deserved, and never shall deserve, any praise.

And when we turn from the thought of what we do to the thought of what we are, how much less reason is there for any praise! We may be, or seem to be, better than some one else, but what a wretched basis for praise this is! And how much evil and worthlessness there is in the very best of men! One need not speak in any spirit of cynicism or unappreciation to say this. The world is full of love; but God deserves all the credit for that. It is full also of follies and vanities and weaknesses; and these are the only things that man can claim as his own. Chinese Gordon was one of the best men in the world, but he was not deceived.

"If a man speaks well of me," he wrote to his sister, "divide it by millions, and then it will be millions of times too favourable. If a man speaks evil of me, multiply it by millions, and it will be millions of times too favourable. Man is disguised, as far as his neighbour is concerned; this disguise is his outward goodness. Some have it in a slight measure torn off in this life, and are judged accordingly by those whose disguise of goodness is more intact; the revelation of the evil by this partial tearing off is but the manifestation of what exists. Whether the disguise is torn or intact, the interior and true state (known to God quite clearly) is the same corrupt thing; the eye of the Spirit discerns through the disguise.

"Who could bear to have this disguise quite rent off, and the evil exposed to the eyes of the world? How would the world receive me, if they knew what I really was and what God knows that I am at this minute? Yet, how hardly I judge another whose disguise,

slightly rent, shows little of the corruption I know exists in me. Nothing evil was ever said of any man which was not true; his worst enemies could not say a thousandth part of the evil that is in him." And long afterwards he wrote to this sister: "In my spiritual nature, I despise the world, its praise or blame. I know of nothing to be admired in my body or its actions from my birth to this day. The world's praises are satires on me; its blame is just, though not from right motives."

Every good man holds this view. No saint ever would have consented to his canonization. And many good men have left instructions that there should be no biography written, because there would be sure to be praise in it that would give no true idea of the man. General S. C. Armstrong left behind the admonition: "I wish no effort at a biography of myself made. Good friends might get up a pretty good story, but it would not be the whole truth. The truth of a life usually lies deep down; we hardly know ourselves—God only does. I trust His mercy. The shorter one's creed the better. 'Simply to Thy cross I cling,' is enough for me."

And one of the most characteristic stories of William Carey tells us: "Among those who visited him in his last illness was Alexander Duff, the Scotch missionary. On one of the last occasions on which he saw him—if not the very last—he spent some time talking chiefly about Carey's missionary life, till at length the dying man whispered, 'Pray.' Duff knelt down and prayed, and then said good-bye. As he passed from the room, he thought he heard a feeble voice pronouncing his name, and turning, he found that he was recalled. He stepped back, accordingly, and this is

what he heard, spoken with a gracious solemnity, 'Mr. Duff, you have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey; when I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey —speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour.' Duff went away rebuked and awed, with a lesson in his heart that he never forgot."

To become subjects of praise is to run the risk of obscuring Christ, of usurping glory which belongs to Him. For what good is there in us or our doings which is not from Him and to His praise? And it is to run the risk also of obscuring the actual facts of life. For any attainment or achievement is made to appear praiseworthy only by comparing it, not with the ideal above it, but with some failure below it. The best man is a poor affair in comparison with perfection. His finest qualities are only shimmers of shadows.

> "His greatness, only great does seem
> To little minds who do it so esteem."

Why not, then, rise above the desire for praise, and cultivate instead a positive distaste for it? We can do this by not reading what is written about us, if by any chance anything ever is written, by not courting any flattery or approbation, by remembering always that all for which the world praises us, if rightly seen, would only show the more vividly the chasm between what we are and what we do and the infinite power and perfect character of God. Let us go quietly forward with our duty, living unto God and not unto men, knowing that from the Lord we are to receive the only judgment and the only reward that are of consequence.

We serve the Lord Christ. He was meek and lowly of heart.

We are to be men and women who see and praise the best in others, who wish no praise for ourselves, who have no use for medals and whose eyes are ever and only to the Lord we serve.

5

THE TEACHINGS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

THERE is no more fascinating and yet terrible problem in the Bible or in the history of the human soul than the tragic problem of Judas. What was the man's real character? How are we to account for his treason? It has been held by some that the true explanation of Judas' act is to be found in his energy and aggression of character. He firmly believed in Jesus as the Messiah, it is said, and was confident that when the real test came Jesus would show that it was He who was to deliver Israel. His ideas of the deliverance were of the political order, and he was eager for the time to come when Jesus would come forth and assume His Kingship. As the months ran on into years he became increasingly restless. It seemed to him that it was necessary to force a crisis, and, impatient of Jesus' delay, he took matters in his own hands and brought the crisis on, fully expecting that it would result in Jesus' triumphant recognition by the people as Messiah and King. When, instead, to his consternation, Jesus was condemned to death, Judas was filled with horror, and returned the money to the chief priests, and went away and hanged himself. On this theory, it was impatience that led Judas to betray Jesus. There is something to be said for this view, but it does not satisfy the representations of the Gospels.

A second view is that Judas' motive was pure avarice. We know that he was a money-seeker. He objected to the lavishness of the love of the woman with the alabaster box, and John tells us frankly that it was his avarice that prompted his objection, because he bore the bag and stole from it (John 12: 6). The evangelists lay emphasis on the mercenary character of his dealings with the chief priests as they bargained with him for Jesus' betrayal. The man, we are told in this view, was so avaricious, so greedy of gain, that he was ready to sell even his best friend for a few coins. This is the traditional view of Judas.

A third view is that the money element was secondary—that the explanation of Judas' treachery is to be found in his foresight and boldness, combined with his pure selfishness. He realized that the end of Jesus' career had come, and that His cause was doomed. He was no man to stay on a sinking ship, and, perceiving that it was time to escape, he fearlessly took the necessary steps to save himself, and to come out of the alliance with the Prophet who had lost His cause, with profit and safety. He betrayed Jesus, accordingly, only to save himself.

There are other explanations, but there are lessons enough for one time in these. In any one of these Judas' weakness was a distortion of a quality of strength. It was a virtue run into a vice, a strong quality deflected into shame and wrong. If he betrayed Jesus out of impatience, his very impatience was the child of force and aggression of character. If his motive was avarice, his avarice was the exaggeration and product of his shrewdness and capacity. He knew how to manage, and his thrift was twisted into mean and treacherous infidelity. If he did what he

did purely out of the selfish desire to save himself in the day of calamity, it must be admitted that his foresight was correct. The storm which he precipitated was bound to break in any case. He merely prepared for it. He had the daring as well as the foresight to do this. There are many more who foresee contingencies, but who lack the boldness to do the deed. But Judas dared. Soul of selfishness that he was, he deliberately betrayed Jesus because he thought that was the safe and profitable thing to do, and because he was not afraid to act upon his opinions.

This is one lesson from Judas' life for us. Our great perils are the perils of our virtues, of our qualities of strength, even more than of our recognized vices and elements of weakness. And this for two reasons: First, it is easy to carry a quality of strength to a development that makes it injurious. Just because it is already a quality of strength, growth comes easily to it. So devotion to principle may become hardness and wilfulness, firmness may become arbitrariness, confidence may become pride, force may glide into impatience, capacity into want of care, and good fellowship into the easy negligence of ineradicable and uncompromisable moral distinction. Judas' impatience was but the abnormal and unguarded development of his strength and positiveness and force of character.

And, secondly, we are too often blind to the ease with which some virtues pass not only into a harmful excess of development, but even clear over into their opposite vices. What is more intolerant, for example, than the bigotry of tolerance? Some of the most notoriously bigoted bodies are those whose boasted principle of tolerance has passed clean

over into the very vice it reprobated. Nothing can be more illiberal than liberalism. So culture, also, which started out on the large view of life, passes over into narrowness and provincialism. And no danger is more real in our humility than the danger of pride. Amiel comments on this in his journal. The career of Judas warns us, accordingly, to be on our guard at the points where we are strongest. It is there that our greatest temptations will assail us, and there that we may have our most disastrous falls.

And this danger suggests another akin to it, namely, that our real perils are those of which we are least aware. This was Judas' failure. He fell, on the most charitable interpretation of his character, not at the points of weakness, where he would be on his guard, but at the point of strength, where he was overconfident and negligent. Or even if we say that Judas was utterly abandoned, a bad man through and through, it would still be true of him, as it is of all bad men, that they find some excuse for their badness, and that of the real extent and meaning of their badness they are unaware. There is a moral colour-blindness that is as real as physical colour-blindness. Robert Buchanan, we are told, strolled to and fro among the paddocks reading his Greek Testament until the betting began, when he laid his wager and then watched the races. How accurate could the moral exegesis of such a scholar be? There was smoke on the lens and the lens was unaware of it. The greatest warnings of the Bible are against just such unconscious failure. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It is because the peril of life is greatest where we see no peril that we need to keep

the soul sensitive and discerning, and beware of all that bedims and stupefies the moral judgment. This is the ground on which Tolstoy argues against the use of alcohol and narcotics. Unknown to the man who uses them, he holds, their effect is to torpify the keen sensibilities of the spiritual nature. Something did this with Judas. Perhaps it was the love of money, perhaps the love of power, perhaps his arbitrary self-will. Whatever it was, he let it gain the mastery over him, as sleeping sentinels let the enemy climb into the citadel. The sentinels of the soul must be awake, and awake at the very points where it seems safest to sleep.

The history of Judas illustrates the tenacity of an evil deed. Shame clings remorselessly. After his death, when the disciples spoke of him it was of "Judas who was guide to them that took Jesus." As they told the story of Jesus' early life, they worked into it, in their references to Judas long before his tragic fate, the shadow of his shipwreck. Matthew and Luke, in their lists of the apostles at the time of their call, marked him as Judas Iscariot, "who also betrayed Jesus," or "who became a traitor" (John 12: 4; 18: 2, 5; Matt. 26: 25; 27: 3). Sin cleaves to those who soil themselves with it, and the shame of it follows them along their way.

We see, also, the backward stroke of sin. Sin is not content to send its mark onward with a man; it reaches behind into the past and forces its shame on those who are gone. Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, is the man's name as it has been preserved to us. Iscariot means Ish Kerioth, a man of Kerioth. Where that village was we do not know. It was probably a simple Judæan town, with good and bad people mingling

in its streets and leading just such a quiet life as hundreds of other villages whose names have been entirely forgotten. But alas, this village has not been allowed to slip into the unremembered past. It was the home of the man who sold the Saviour of the world for thirty silver coins. And Simon, doubtless, was an ordinary Judæan peasant, perhaps with other children who lived honourably and died in peace. We do not know. We know only that he was the man out of whose loins Judas, the traitor, came. We imagine sometimes that sin is our own concern, that the dead are gone and that no part of the shame or burden of our evildoing can come upon them. It is a great mistake. The past and the dead are not secure. They are more in peril, more defenseless than the future and the unborn. These last will have a word to say for themselves, but the past is silenced and can lift no hand to cleanse or restore its good name. This is part of the ingratitude and dishonour of sin. It is a blow at the helpless, the defilement of the dead. Down through the ages Judas drags Simon and Kerioth, his father and his home, known to the world and to the end of time for only this one thing, that they brought forth the man who betrayed his Lord and the Saviour of mankind with a kiss. And our lesser sins are of no less shame. All that we do that is unworthy is a disloyalty to the past, which we are here to perfect and complete and not to defile, and to those who bore us to honour and whom we should not deliver to shame.

It is to be hoped that Judas had no children. Their father's deed would have been too heavy a burden for them to bear. For we must remember that sin reaches forward as well as back, and pollutes the future as well as the past.

These are some of the bitter lessons from the disciple who was the Saviour's familiar friend,—who walked with Him and talked with Him, ate and slept with Him, and then lifted up his hand against Him. But from the story we learn not only the dreadfulness, the deceitfulness, the deadliness of sin, but also the patience and tender love of Christ. Even when Judas had done his worst and came with his band at night to betray his Master with his kiss, we read that Jesus received him not with scorn and contempt, not with solemn judgment and rebuke, but with the calm and gentle words, "Friend, do that for which thou art come" (Matt. 26: 50). He would still call the traitor "Friend." As we ponder such love, we are drawn afresh to Him who can thus endure and forgive, and whose strength and grace alone can set us free and make us clean from the sin by which Judas fell.

III. THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

1. *The Perils of Our Virtues.*
2. *The Why of Hard Conditions.*
3. *The Glory of Unanswered Prayer.*
4. *The Snare of Sincerity.*
5. *The Money Test of Character.*

I

THE PERILS OF OUR VIRTUES

THERE is no getting away from the danger and discipline of life. Monks thought they could escape by retiring to cells and caves, but the attempt was futile, because men carry their lives with them wherever they go, and it is in the movings and responses of life that the real perils are found. St. Anthony withdrew where he would not see the sights of the world that dazzle and allure; but he was not delivered. He had an inward eye, and its possibility of peril was as great as physical vision. Indeed, the only peril of his physical vision arose from the assent and acquiescent interest of the eyes of the mind. To move the body away from the world is not to deliver the soul from fleshliness. The real dangers are within.

And as men do not escape from the peril of life by any horizontal movement from one place to another place, so they do not escape by any vertical movement from lower ranges to higher. They simply change the quality of their dangers. Many men have been delivered from the coarse physical temptations. They walk in the midst of them exempt, unawares, unsolicited because there is no inward response, no momentary consciousness of desire. And this is a great gain. This is the proper movement and destiny of life, a progressive inward deliverance, range succeeding range of ever new and expanding life, and each new development leaving behind, as a skin sloughed away, the grosser perils of the life now transcended.

But this is not to be quit of all peril. The new altitudes have their own. The coarser temptations of the rougher life hid for a while the finer dangers. The soul had no discernment of them. It was busy with a bludgeon warfare. But now in the new sphere to which it has advanced a new set of adversaries await it, more furtive and subtle, harder to define and attack, but none the less real and all the more dangerous on that account. The cultivated man is not tempted to brutality, but selfishness allures him with an insidiousness proportionate to his escape from vice.

And the Christian life is full of these concentric or successive belts of temptation. Many men fall because they do not perceive this. They assume that the only temptations are the grosser ones which they meet at the outset of their Christian lives, and they prepare for battle with them. They do not realize that beyond these the very virtues which the Christian life produces are beset with new dangers. And not seeing this, they yield to subtle evils which they have not discovered and scrutinized. In this way many have made shipwreck of their characters on the rocks of an aspiration for spirituality. Perhaps this was part of what Mr. Gladstone meant when he wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland:

"There is one proposition which the experience of life burns into my soul; it is this, that a man should beware of letting his religion spoil his morality. In a thousand ways, some great, some small, but all subtle, we are daily tempted to the great sin. To speak of such a thing seems dishonouring to God; but it is not religion as it comes from Him, it is religion with the strange and evil mixtures which it gathers from abiding in us."

No small measure of contempt falls upon the higher Christian life on this account. And many earnest men lose their influence with the world because they do not perceive that their very progress has brought them into a new range of perils, against which they must be on their guard, and from which they must save their souls.

Each Christian man can discover for himself the subtler perils which are peculiar to his own soul, but there are many which are so common among active Christian workers as to deserve a general characterization.

The Christian man begins by fighting a battle against actual evil and by winning it, but he is exposed in doing so to the danger of depreciating the guilt of evil, of thought and imagination. He will never fall into gross sin; therefore he need not be scrupulous about avoiding books and papers which deal with it. Purity of art constitutes no warrant for imperilling purity of imagination. Once the fountain is tainted the stream will not long continue clean. Good men should be the more, not the less, cautiously scrupulous to keep their conversation stainless of all faintest suggestion of evil or coarseness, and their minds aloof from all salacious curiosities.

The Christian worker fights against the spirit of torpor, of indolence, of self-solicitude, and sooner or later begins to possess the character of intense and continuous application to work and activity. The zeal of his Father's house eats him up. He spends himself, and with Paul, spends himself out. "Be doing and be done," quotes Mr. Gladstone. Is he aware that this very new virtue carries with it a new danger, the peril of absorption in work, of incapacity for relaxa-

tion and rest? Some men get so busy in Christian work that they have no time for prayer and none for friendship, and the consequence is surely seen in lessened power and impoverished love. Many Christian workers are the slaves of good purposes. They are not free. They are bound. The intensity of their will to accomplish much of good prevents their minds from ever being at leisure from themselves to soothe and sympathize, for cheerful fellowship and unrestrained kindness. The Saviour left us an example here. He made it His meat and drink to do His Father's will, yet the little children knew He was accessible and were not repulsed, and the people thronged Him, and the Pharisees called Him the friend of publicans and sinners. He was Himself, and He was all men's.

The Christian worker contends against the sense of pride and self-exaggeration. He seeks to esteem other men better than himself and to be like Christ, who made Himself the servant of all. The peril is that he will not be able with Christ to realize that he is a prince of God and of the truth and a King's son and master of the worlds and of men, and that his work is the supremest of all works and for the saving of the world.

Dickens has said that it is a requisite of success that a man should believe his particular work to be the greatest work in the world. But the Christian spirit of humility and the sense of humour which give a man a just perspective of himself are full of the danger that a man will fail thereby to take a justly exaggerated view of his own place and work, and will accordingly get much less accomplished than some other man who takes himself seriously, who sees his

work in exalted outlines, who has learned the secret of Paul, both to be abased and to abound, and of the Saviour who was both the servant and the sovereign of humanity.

The firmer Christian life and service are full of these anomalies, these balanced dangers. (1) There is, as I have suggested, the peril of absorption in work and of the consequent incapacity for rest and relaxation. (2) Such intensity of purpose in the accomplishment of results as to prevent the mind from ever being at leisure from itself for sympathy and cheerful, unrestrained fellowship; the enslavement of good purpose in the world. (3) The peril of keeping the balance between the assentive and the oppositive moods. We seek always to give a response to that with which we agree, and we lose the sharp edge of discernment of error. We perceive with keen vision error and mistake, and we fall out of that charity and sympathy by which alone we may hope to win men. (4) The difficulty of walking evenly between absolute faith in the unseen potency of truth, on one hand, and the legitimate desire to see the tangible results of spiritual effort, on the other. (5) The difficulty of personal judgment; of avoiding all malice and yet speaking the truth, even about wicked and unworthy men. Believing all things and yet believing only the truth. Speaking lovingly of all men and yet denouncing liars.

Much of this advance peril of life is due doubtless to the confusion of simple impulse by reflective self-consciousness. We conquer coarse sin by fighting against the inner disposition to respond. But the victory over the outer evil leaves us with the new conflict of the inner soul upon us, the struggle between unconscious instincts toward good and the self-con-

sciousness of virtue. To imbed our moral impulse in conscious reason is a gain, but it is a gain with loss, with new and real possibilities of danger. As Pobyedonostseff says in *The Reflections of a Russian Statesman:*

"The justest sentiments of the human soul remain true only while they preserve their independence and simplicity, for there is nothing simple which is not also right. The danger for every simple sentiment is its image in the consciousness—its reflex action. Sentiment acquires a new force when confirmed by reason and sanctioned by ideas; but at the same time it meets with the new danger of absorption by the reflective faculty, and of consequent loss of simplicity. It may happen that sentiment, leaning upon thought for support, partakes of its nature, and reissues as a conscious formula, from which the element of sentiment has disappeared. The form, as the letter, may fill the living spirit; the form deceives, for beneath it insensibly develop hypocrisy and the seductions of human vanity. Is there one thing more splendid, more precious, more fruitful than the sentiment of love in the human soul? Yet from the moment it unites with reason, a danger threatens it from this reflex action. It may create itself a form, divide itself into classes, doctrines, categories, orders and schools. At last the time must come when it is no longer a simple sentiment, filling and enlivening the soul, but our poor human vanity imagines that it masters the sentiment and makes it its bondsman and instrument. Here simplicity disappears, decomposition begins, and, with but little more, hypocrisy may end it. The works of love, it may be, will multiply, order will replace impulse, but simplicity of feeling has flown, the perfume has departed."

The comfort and encouragement of it all is that our introduction to new perils is parallel with our deliverance from old, and that, with finer dangers, we have also ampler resources of strength and skill to antagonize them and subdue them. If evil presents itself in more delicately seductive forms as we draw nearer Christ, we may rejoice that it is because we are drawing nearer Christ, and that the Saviour close at hand is able to deliver us and to present us flawless before His Presence with exceeding joy.

2

THE WHY OF HARD CONDITIONS

UR natural tendency is to complain of the hardness of our conditions and limitations, our testings and tribulations, especially in comparison with those of others. We take it as an injustice that another man has so much greater spiritual and moral resources than we have, that we win only with greatest difficulty a battle which another wins easily or does not have to fight at all, or that we are compelled to give up that which another is allowed to keep, when often we are sure that he will not guard nearly so lovingly his treasure which he retains, as we would have guarded ours which we have had to yield up. This problem of inequality probably constitutes to many of us the real problem of life.

Our supposition is that if only these hard and unequal conditions could be evened up and made easy and ideal, the result would be beneficial. A prominent California educator declared at a banquet in Los Angeles that he believed that a new type of man was to be developed in southern California superior to anything that had been developed elsewhere or before. Beneath skies of perpetual summer, with all life lived out of doors, with nature affluent and tolerant and recklessly generous on every hand, a larger and nobler-natured man could be made. But it is not so. You can never breed so solid or robust or effective a man under unclouded sunshine and perpetual summer

and amid orange groves and roses as can be bred among granite rocks and on a reluctant soil and amid storms and struggle.

Making things easy, evening up, smoothing out the rough inequalities, will be of no sure or lasting benefit to men. So far as these inequalities have their roots within us, they will all come back again. "John," said a successful business man to a socialist workingman on his place, "I understand you want to divide everything up so that each one may have an equal share. Now, if we did that to-day, in fifteen years I would have all your share back again." The difference between the two men was not due to any external difference of lot. The successful man had started in as a day labourer. It was due to the different attitudes the two men took toward their outwardly similar conditions.

And so far as these inequalities do not have their root within ourselves, but are a fact of our ordered lot, of what Peter calls our "suffering by the will of God," their ironing out or evening up would be positively harmful to us. For these trials, limitations, inequalities, as we deem them, are beneficial to us, and, so far as we are able to see, cannot possibly be spared from life and from the school of life in which we are training.

These things test men. They sift apart the weak and the strong, the useless and the useful. Thus they make it possible for the efficient men to combine their strength and act together. A great many men are ineffective and obstructive. Without some sifting influence the good men would be swallowed up in this throng and their energies stifled. And in each man these tests try out force from frailty, the true from

the false, prove how much the man can endure and achieve.

At Columbia University there is a very interesting little building whose sole purpose is to test alleged fireproof flooring materials. The floor to be tested is built into this building as a roof. "Under it is built a fierce fire, averaging 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit, sometimes reaching 2,000. This is kept up for four hours, while delicate instruments measure the heat of the floor and its sagging under a load of pig iron, 150 pounds to the square foot. Then water is turned on the whole, and after the floor has cooled a weight of 600 pounds to the square foot is placed upon it. If it stands this tremendous test, the floor system is approved. Several have already stood it." Men need such tests as well as flooring materials. And the trials and hard conditions supply these tests and give men their class and the work which goes with their class. The blessing of the man who endures his tests is that he gets the crown of life which marks him as a true workman, a qualified son of the ever-working God.

These things also harden men. In other words, they make character, which is the fixed image wherein the lines are cut abidingly. It is the hard conditions that do this. It is these which shut up life to its right possibilities alone. The New Testament writers say that they make steadfastness. Soft and easy conditions will not do this. "In future," wrote Mr. Gladstone at the age of twenty-three to a friend, "I hope circumstances will bind me down with a rigour which my natural sluggishness will find it impossible to elude. . . . Periods like these, grievous generally in many of their results, are by no means unfavourable to the due growth and progress of individual charac-

ter. I remember a very wise saying of Archidamus in Thucydides that the being educated ἐν τοις αναγκαιοτοτοις brings strength and efficacy to the character." The passage in Thucydides to which he refers reads: "We should remember that man differs little from man, except that he turns out best who is trained in the sharpest school." If any would like to read a noble tribute to the type of rigid and noble character developed in such a school, let him turn to Horace Bushnell's sermon on "The Age of Homespun," at the Litchfield County Centennial in 1851. "Let no delicate spirit that despises work grow up in your sons and daughters," said Bushnell in closing. "Make these rocky hills smooth their faces and smile under your industry." Such agriculture may not produce heavily in grain, but it bears a tremendous yield in character. The toils and testings of it expand without limit the list of things to which man will not surrender.

And the hard things not only test and harden, they also refine. This is the noble imagery of the Old Testament. There God is thought of as the great refiner. "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver." It is only in this light that we can understand the fierce discipline of God. For

> "Life is not as idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use."

Thus Tennyson puts it in "In Memoriam." A lowlier poet expresses it in "God's Anvil":

"Pain's furnace-heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow,
And all my heart in anguish shivers
And trembles at the fiery glow.
And yet I whisper, 'As God will!'
And in His hottest fire hold still.

"He comes, and lays my heart, all heated,
On the hard anvil, minded so
Into His own fair shape to beat it
With His great hammer, blow on blow!
And yet I whisper, 'As God will!'
And heaviest blows hold still.

"He takes my softened heart and beats it;
The sparks fly off at every blow.
He turns it o'er and o'er, and heats it,
And lets it cool, and makes it glow.
And yet I whisper, 'As God will!'
And in His mighty hand hold still.

"Why should I murmur? for the sorrow
Thus only longer-lived would be;
Its end may come, and will, to-morrow,
When God has done His work in me.
So I say, trusting, 'As God will!'
And, trusting to the end, hold still.

"He kindles for my profit purely
Affliction's glowing, fiery brand;
And all His heaviest blows are surely
Inflicted by a Master-hand.
So I say, praying, 'As God will!'
And hope in Him, and suffer still!"

These are the hard things which refine and qualify for service. With the comfort wherewith we have

been comforted of God in just such discipline are we able to comfort others also. What we have endured we can help others to endure. Thus our hard things make us, give life its finish. They endow it with its power of fine service, and also illuminate it with the joy of the great hope, for "tribulation worketh stedfastness, and stedfastness, approvedness, and approvedness, hope."

And then the hard things positively stimulate and inspire men. "It is the boys who have faced and conquered hard physical jobs," said General S. C. Armstrong, "that become the men of endurance later. . . . God's hand points to a steep and craggy height. It must be climbed. I will climb it. . . . I have had a taste of blood; that is, I have had the taste of life and work—cannot live without the arena. I must be in it. . . . Despair shakes his skinny fingers and glares his hideous eyes on me to little purpose. I feel happy when all my powers of resistance are taxed." This was the spirit of Paul. "I rejoice in hope of the glory of God," he said, "and not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations." The presence of difficulties, of opposition, of adversaries, aroused his spirit. He rejoiced to embrace opportunities of work which brought him into collision with such hard conditions. "I determined to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost," he declared, "for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." And even our Lord Himself must have felt the keen joy of His difficulties. To redeem man as He redeemed him, by becoming man, and then with human hands undoing what human hands had done, saving human nature by taking it on Himself and saving it by itself —how glorious and inspiring the very consciousness

of it and of the hardness of it must have been to Him! If He so endured, what are we that we should complain?

It is all right, accordingly, to be in a world with evil in it. It is perilous, but it need not be fatal. It can be best. We see here not an explanation of the problem of sorrow and pain, but the moral use of them; "as instruments by which God is pleased to forward that restoring process for which we are placed on earth," as Gladstone wrote on the occasion of the death of his mother. It is better for us to find things hard. The result we seek may be harder to attain, but it is the process, not the result, which is life. And thus also we realize the significance and the privilege of the chastisement of God, the discipline without which we are not sons. In all our tribulations, therefore, let us rejoice and be glad, and shout for joy.

3

THE GLORY OF UNANSWERED PRAYER

TO many Christians unanswered prayer is a great mystery and trial of faith. It is so clear that God has promised to hear and answer prayer. The assurance of the Saviour and of the Scriptures is so explicit and confident. It is true that conditions are attached, such as that our prayer must be in accordance with God's will, that it must be in the name of Christ and that it must be with faith. But often all the conditions appear to us to have been fulfilled, or if they have not been, then we do not see how we can ever fulfill them so as to be sure that we have done so; and yet we have received no answer. It is an enigma to us, and while we still believe in prayer, we hardly know how to adjust ourselves to its mystery.

But we forgot that "No" and "Not now" are answers. "Yes" and "At once" are not the only answers. Oftentimes we cannot know the will of God because we have not the wisdom of God. We think that that would be best which God sees would be useless or positively harmful to us. We think we are asking in the name of Christ when it is a selfish prayer that we are making, a prayer that would keep some dear one away from Christ's immediate presence, and here amid peril and limitations and tears. We think we are confident, and we are only self-assured. God knows, and He gives or He withholds. But His with-

holding is an answer as definite and specific as His giving would have been.

All this is the commonplace way we have of reconciling our faith in prayer and in God as the hearer and answerer of prayer with our apparent failures in the use of prayer. But there is a far nobler and richer way of viewing it. What we call unanswered prayer is full of a great splendour. For one thing, it brings out in a peculiar glory the character of God. It shows us, as no confusion of our wills and God's will in God's undiscriminating compliance with our prayers would show us, the noble restraint of God. Only God could be wise and strong enough to refuse to answer us and to hold His love in the leash of His wisdom. This is what Professor Nash describes so wonderingly in *The Atoning Life.*

"If the Christian were asked to give his impression of God in a single phrase, he would say, God's restraint. He knows, to his shame he knows, that his own growth in knowledge and power is not attended by an equivalent growth in restraint. His knowledge, if it comes to be large and imposing, imperils the mental freedom of other men. If he has much to impart and has the gift of expression in large measure, he is fairly sure to talk other people down. He dominates the minds of others, does not create individuality in them. And as to his power, his inbred tendency is to assert it to its limit. This is the instinctive tendency of all human power. Thus the man in the automobile, with a wonderful instrument obedient to his hand, uses the power of his machine to the utmost, forgetting the rights of other people. The same thing holds true of political power. The tendency to despotism is ingrained. The object of all constitutional government is to furnish

power with checks and balances, imposing upon it limits which it dare not pass over. The most serious struggle of civilization is to keep the law from becoming, in Solon's terrible phrase, like the net which holds the little fish, while the big fish break through. This inbred tendency of human power masters us even in the holiest places. The head of the family becomes a despot from whose loving tyranny there is no escape. The teacher turns his scepter into a rod or a spear. The friend destroys the bloom and fragrance of friendship by overbearing the one he loves.

" God, as the Christian knows Him, has a restraint as strong as His omnipotence. His power is infinite, His knowledge illimitable. If a man were God, then woe to his fellow-men. His very goodness would become their bane. He would establish a tyranny swallowing the individuality of men, in order to keep them from sin. But how wonderful is our God! His attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience do not imperil a man's right to be his fullest self. They safeguard and insure that right. And while the friend of God admires Him for many things, this is the summit of his admiration. God's restraint is as deep as His being and His power."

And the restraint of God is not a quality of His arbitrary will. It is a characteristic of His love. There is always a love in the discipline of God, but there is also always a discipline in His love. His love is a discipline. God is love at work. All His affection for us is creative. What He gives us or takes from us is of little moment. The great thing is what He is making of us. And He makes us patient by the discipline of unanswered prayer. How that does this we shall see. But we note now that it is only such love as God's is that could make us so. To withhold is

always harder than to give. Every father knows how hard it is to deny a dear child anything that that dear child desires. And many human loves collapse at this point. The father cannot wait; and the child is the worse for its answered petition. In nothing does the noble fatherhood of God stand out more gloriously than in the filial discipline of its denials. Happy are they who can trust Him and be still. When the Roman army turned against the Emperor Maurice, he fled to escape the fury of Phocas. He was not allowed to escape, however. By the order of Phocas he and his five sons were seized and executed. As one by one the sons were killed before his eyes, the father cried aloud with each stroke of the sword, " Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true is thy judgment." Maurice believed in the love whose ways were beyond his knowing and was the more sure of it where he could not understand. A sublime patience comes to those who thus endure.

That is one supreme blessing of unanswered prayer. It acquaints us more deeply with God. It gives us foundation for our faith and trust beyond all accident and circumstance. We do not believe for any reward —for the bread and games. We believe not in God's doings or in God's donations, but in God. He is our trust and our exceeding great reward. Our unanswered prayers give us our God in a deeper, richer sense than we ever could have had Him through His gifts. God we want, after all. It is for Him that the soul pants as the hart after the water brooks. We seek the deep experience of God. His withholding of the thing we asked for is the offer of Himself—the God above our askings, and the God embracing them.

To Horace Bushnell such a great giving of the Giver

Himself was vouchsafed. He was away from home at the time, and he wrote to his wife: "I have had some delightful times and passages since I came here, such as I never had before. I never so saw God, never had Him come so broadly, clearly out. He has not spoken to me, but He has done what is more. There has been nothing debatable to speak of, but an infinite easiness and universal presentation to thought, as it were by revelation. Nothing ever seemed so wholly inviting and so profoundly supreme to the mind. Had there been a strain for it, then it could not be. Oh, my God! what a fact to possess and know that He is! I have not seemed to compare Him with anything, and set Him in a higher value; but He has been the *all,* and the altogether, everywhere, lovely. There is nothing else to compete; there is nothing else, in fact. It has been as if all the revelations, through good men, nature, Christ, had been now through, and their cargo unloaded, the capital meaning produced, and the God set forth in His proper day—the good, the true, the perfect, the all-holy and benignant. The question has not been whether I could somehow get nearer—nearer, my God, to Thee; but as if He had come out Himself just near enough, and left me nothing but to stand still and see the salvation; no excitement, no stress, but an amazing beatific tranquillity. I never thought I could possess God so completely. What is to come of it? Something good and glorious, I hope."

It is our unanswered prayers that stop us in our wild pursuits, bidding us pause and teaching us patience. We are all for action, for acquisition, for achievements. Our fret and restlessness hinder and thwart the calm, great purposes of God. We will not be still long enough to hear His voice, recalling us to

our true bearings, checking our standards and revising our schemes. So there is nothing for God to do but to hurl us back and bid us be still and know that He is God. So we bow to the "No" of God, and grow quiet and strong again. Here in unanswered prayers are the springs of the deep and the glowing and potent life. George Croly teaches us the noble truth nobly in his hymn:

"Spirit of God! Descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.

"I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies;
No sudden rending of the veil of clay;
No angel visitant, no opening skies;
But take the dimness of my soul away.

"Hast Thou not bid us love Thee, God and King?
All, all Thine own, soul, heart, and strength and mind;
I see Thy cross, then teach my heart to cling!
Oh, let me seek Thee, and, oh, let me find.

"Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear;
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

"Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove—
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame!"

Love's rich joy is in its confidence. It knows that nothing can prevail over it. It does not matter with

what darts it is assailed; it is immortal. It does not matter how deep you submerge it. Many waters cannot quench it. It is stronger than death. And its supreme glory is in its triumph over all suspicion, every doubt, the subtlest insinuations. And faith is only love. It is that attitude of mind and heart which in the will we call love. It rises highest from the deepest valleys and shines out most radiant from the darkest shadows. "Though he slay me," it cries, "yet will I trust in him." Yes, from unanswered prayer it draws its supremest faith in prayer. Both God and prayer become more real and dear to it. It understands why in his list of the order of Christian gifts Paul places first missionary service, second spiritual vision, third the teaching of truth, and only after these, those miracles and gifts of healing for which we ask in the prayers whose denial shakes our faith in God.

Again and again may it shake and quiver until at last, detached from dependence upon all acts and gifts, all things and possessions, it rests upon God, upon God alone, and we are satisfied with God.

4

THE SNARE OF SINCERITY

SINCERITY is one of the currently idolized words. It is often made the supreme test and touchstone. It is held that if only men and women are sincere, they are fundamentally right; all else is of secondary moral consequence. This is the common view. A teacher in a well-known girls' school was recently heard arguing earnestly for it. "What people believe," she said, "is not of consequence. The important thing is not what they believe, but whether they are sincere in it."

Common as this view is, it is sheer nonsense. Suppose one of the pupils of this teacher had answered the question, "When did Columbus discover America?" by replying 1490, and another by replying 1495, would the teacher have replied, if both had been sincere, "You are both right"? What a helpful thing it would be to attend such a school! In buying groceries, are we satisfied if the grocer sincerely makes a mistake in changing our money, and gives us three dollars in change when he should have given seven? Do we say, "Hush, I will say nothing about it. Sincerity is the great thing, and the man is entirely sincere."

Sincerity is not the great thing. Truth is the great thing. The facts of history and of the multiplication table will not bend a hair's breadth. They are so and so, or they are not so and so, entirely independent of our feeling about them. Sincerity is of significance in

connection with them only when it is allied to a perception and acknowledgment of the truth.

All men recognize this in the sphere of historical and mathematical and physical fact. But it is equally true in the realm of moral fact. It is not enough to be honest; we must be honestly right. The thugs in India were sincere and conscientious enough. They lay in wait for travellers, and murdered them from a sense of religious duty. When the British Government began to hang them, there were many Hindus modern enough in their views to argue, as Sir Charles Trevelyan said, "Why do you hang So-and-So? It is a pity that you should hang him; he is such a religious man, so exemplary in all the relations of life, such a good husband, such a good father—you should not hang him." But the British Government could not be persuaded that sincerity of opinion or motive on the part of a murderer was an excuse for his crime. There are sincere polygamists in Utah, sincere liars in every state, sincere cannibals in Africa and the South Seas. Does their sincerity palliate their wrongdoing? Jesus warned His disciples that the time was coming when those who killed them would think that they did service to God. What would God think? If He wrote on men's hearts the love of a right moral life, and men erased the lines and persuaded themselves that that was right which God deemed wrong, would God say, "Oh, well, it is all right. It is a small matter after all. The only important thing is that they should think they are right, and be quiet in their minds."

The very curse of much of our thought and much of our life is that they are wrong or inadequate, and we do not know or do not care to find it out. We are entirely sincere and conscientious, and that very fact

is a soporific, and we go on in bad and immoral ways in entire comfort. It is in this light that one may see the measure of truth there is in the story said to have been told by Police Commissioner McAdoo, of New York City, in an address to a detachment of new policemen: "I am going to tell you a story. There was a marine on board of a battleship who was constantly getting into trouble, breaking the rules. He went to an old sailorman, and he said, 'I will give you all my tobacco if you will tell me how to keep out of getting in trouble.' The old sailorman—they generally despise a marine, who is the policeman, by the way, of the ship—took the tobacco, and he found it was all right, and he said, 'Whenever you are feeling comfortable, you are breaking a rule.'" To make mere sincerity the significant thing lulls men into a negligent serenity which is the gateway of death. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," says Paul, realizing that these are the ones in peril, "take heed lest he fall."

For there is, as Dr. Trumbull pointed out in his Northfield sermon on "Moral Colour-blindness," a conscientious obscuration of the soul's vision, as well as of the physical sight. Our Lord knew this. He never preached the dissolute doctrine that anything will pass if only the man who does it is satisfied. He knew that there are corrupt and depraved sincerities, that men can be blind and say, "We see"; that they could be full of moral night, and imagine that it was light. "If the light that is in thee be darkness," he declared, "how great is that darkness!"

And these principles are true in the spiritual world as well as in the ethical. There are many people today who admit them up to the border of theology, of religious belief, of spiritual knowledge, but who say

that here there can be no objective standards or facts or truths universally known and accepted, and that here, accordingly, sincerity must suffice. It is true, we know only in part in these things, and we should be tolerant and modest. But though we know in part, we know; and where we may know, sincerity in ignorance will not excuse us for disloyalty or hostility to the truth. In some of the larger women's colleges, for example, the religious organizations of the students are entirely unevangelical. In some of them they have been scarcely more than theistic. It is enough, it is urged, that students should be sincere, even though they sincerely reject the divinity of our Lord, and cut themselves off from the offer of the life of God in Christ. But such sincerity is simply a shade better than insincerity. It is no substitute whatever for the truth.

And what is worse, sincerity is often the very enemy of the truth. Sincerity is set up as a goal, and men and women think they have it and rest content with it, and let the truth to which sincerity was meant to lead them go unattained—go often unsought. There is a subtle pride about the feeling of self-satisfaction, and we often think ourselves to be sincere when we are merely conceited, ignorant of the light because we are blind to it, and blind by our own will. The real sincerity is the sincerity of self-distrust, of the child-likeness of heart from which faith springs.

Souls are lost to-day through the sacrifice of the truth to a sham sincerity. The true sincerity is the humble, eager, self-distrusting search of the soul after the truth of God, which those who seek find in Him, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

5

THE MONEY TEST OF CHARACTER

"WE think a great deal of Mr. M. in our town," said a young man, of the pastor of one of the churches in a small city. "I am not a member of his church, but I attend there, and I am one of the ushers. We all like him. He is perfectly genuine. He is so kind, and he is honest, and not afraid! We are fortunate in having such a good man. Other people have tried to get him. Only recently he was called to St. Louis, to a church where he would have received twice his present salary, but he would not go. I thought that was a good test of the kind of man he is."

This is a very common judgment of men. It is often obtruded in an uncharitable and unjust way. And ministers sometimes hesitate to leave one field and to go to another which is more important and offers a more needy and influential opportunity, simply because the salary would be larger and they do not want to be open to any suspicion of having any regard for such considerations. It was a real cross to Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock, when he left Baltimore to go to New York, that the new conditions necessitated and provided a larger salary. He was so absolutely true and sincere that he shrank from the thought that any one might even suspect that his character was not loftily exalted above the thought of the financial provision for his work.

Now, it is well to dispose at once of the maudlin foolishness in which many people indulge in their judgment of others in this matter. Such people imagine that they themselves are exempt from the obligations of standards to which they think others should conform. Religious and unselfish work, they say, should be done with no thought of the wages. This is true with two qualifications; one an expansion, and one a limitation. The expansion is that the work of any man should be religious and unselfish, whether he is in a profession or a trade, and that he should do his work for the love of men and the service of the world and to the glory of God, and has no right to be doing it for the money there is in it. The limitation is, as Paul contended, that those who minister in the Gospel have a right to live by the Gospel, and that there is nothing in the character of Christian work as such which requires that those engaged in it should receive less for food and clothes, and for their own benevolent use, than those engaged in other forms of work receive.

But when this has been said, one is free to take up and press the great truth that all human service and work should be rendered for the sake of the service and work, and that the readiness of men to do this is the test of their characters. The highest man does not work for the wage. He works for the sake of work and its consequences, and not for the return. He takes the wage for the needs of those he loves that he may have to give and to use. But you cannot buy him with money.

There is an Old Testament story from which it is perhaps not unfair to draw an illustration of this principle. When the children of Israel set out from Sinai, Moses endeavoured to induce Hobab, the son of Reuel

the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, to go with them. As an inducement Moses promised him that it would be to his profit to come. "I will not go," said Hobab. "I will go home." Then Moses urged that they needed him as a guide through the wilderness into which they were going. And Hobab changed his mind and went. Some men want wages for their work. Others want work for their wages.

What revelation of our character does the testing of money make? Is it a determining factor with us in our decisions? A man is invited to perform a service, to speak at a religious gathering. No, he says, he cannot come. But the remuneration, it is suggested, will be so much. Well, he reflects, perhaps he can arrange it. Now, there are certain things to be done for those who pay for them, like painting a house, and certain products to be sold to those who have money with which to buy them, like groceries. But there are certain services to which the world is entitled from those able to render them, irrespective of any pay. Religious and surgical services are among them. This is not to say that such services are to be gratuitous services, but only that they are never to bc rendered or refused simply on the determining element of money. The surgeon who can save a life by an operation and will not perform it merely because not adequately paid for it, and the Christian who can help souls to be more like Christ and to bear better the burden and duties of this life and who declines merely because the remuneration is not attractive, are both unworthy of their callings and are ignoble men. "I cannot come except for one hundred dollars," writes a prominent preacher. Very well, we do not want to hear him.

Of what value is money in comparison with worthiness of character? As Robert Louis Stevenson says: "The soul asks for honour and not fame; to be upright, not to be successful; to be good, not prosperous; to be essentially, not outwardly respectable. Does your soul ask profit? Does it ask money? Does it ask the approval of the indifferent herd? I believe not. For my own part, I want but little money, I hope; and I do not want to be decent at all, but to be good."

As a matter of fact, more character is marred by money than is made by it. Men are burdened by it, are separated from simplicity, are poisoned by absurd and devilish notions of social caste, are polluted in the integrity of their moral judgments. It is a necessary and useful thing, but the love of it, as Paul says, is a root of all kinds of evil. Many, reaching after it, have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. There is a peril in its touch, against which our best safeguard is such a noble, half-contemptuous scorn as Jesus always showed. The thing is useful when we treat it as a servile possession. It is a curse when we worship it as an idol, or seek it as an end, or deem it among the important things of life. The world is full of evidence of the truth of such warnings. In a magazine article, a writer tells how a man of honest purposes took his first bribe. The corrupter thrust the bill into his hand and hurried away, leaving the money. The man looked at it. Presently he became used to it. Then the idea of returning it became less vigorous and appealing. And he ended by keeping it. The thing had a villainous power of moral stupefaction in it. It would have been better and easier if he had

torn it into shreds before the briber's footsteps had died away.

In the education of children, it is undoubtedly a difficult problem that parents face here, in training the child to be generous without being wasteful, frugal without acquiring the love of money, either for itself or for what it will buy for them. Money is like life, however. It is life—life-blood coined in metal or rolled out in paper. The principles by which we rule life should rule money. We conceive of life in the spirit of Christ as a trust given us for use, not to be kept but to be lavished for love. We reveal our nearness to the Saviour or our distance from Him by our attitude toward our life. Our money is often an even more conspicuous test, and reveals our more conspicuous failures.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN TEMPER

1. *The Sense of Duty.*
2. *The Oblivion of Great Work.*
3. *The Paradox of Christmas.*
4. *The Dynamic of Discontent.*
5. *The Challenge of Attempted Suppression.*

1

THE SENSE OF DUTY

NE of the most wonderful things in the life of our Lord was His sense of duty. How large a part it played with Him is concealed from us, because the word is so seldom used in our English translation of the Gospels. The English word duty occurs only five times in the Authorized Version, and but once in the Gospels in the words of Jesus. "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants. We have done that which it is our duty to do." But the absence of the term does not indicate the absence of the idea. Again and again the thought of duty is expressed by Christ when He says "I must." "It is my duty to be about my Father's business." "It is my duty to preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for therefore was I sent." "It is my duty to work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also it is my duty to bring." "It is the duty of the Son of man to suffer many things, and be rejected, and be killed." And the Authorized Version combined the last two great ideas with the implication of the Church's duty in the words of our Lord after His Resurrection. "It was Christ's duty to suffer and to rise again from the dead, and (it is your duty to see) that repentance and remission of sins should be

preached in his name unto all the nations." From the first to the last a lofty sense of duty sustained the Son of God.

The life of St. Paul was dominated by the same principle of duty. It was so in his anti-Christian earnestness. "I verily thought with myself that it was my duty to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Nothing turned him aside from what he believed to be the path of duty. His conscience was serene on this point. He was ready to admit afterwards that his moral judgment had been wrong in those days, and, when he afterwards discovered how wrong it had been, he made every reparation in his power, but he never regretted having made duty supreme.

So as a Christian missionary, also, he bent his life with absolute devotion under his conviction of duty. "What do ye weeping and breaking my heart?" he remonstrated with his friends as they sought to dissuade him from the path of duty.

"I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die." With him it was anything for duty.

It must be so with us. A rigid sense of duty is the noblest thing in life. It is nobler than love. For in its lower ranges love is tinged with selfishness, and when it rises above these ranges and is pure, untainted by any requirements of return, it melts into duty and becomes and remains the loftier love by virtue of the preservative purity of duty. Only duty can put eternity into love and lift it above all the vicissitudes, and disappointments, and betrayals of time. And, in fact, the Bible always grounds love upon duty. In it as in God right is the supreme thing. God is right because He is love. And we are bidden to love because we ought. Duty and not affinity is the lofty

motive of the soul. This was our Lord's teaching. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." But what is it to love Him? "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you." And the supreme duty He laid upon His disciples, the commandment He called "new," was the duty of love. "And this is his commandment," says St. John, "that we should love one another. If God so loved us, it is our duty to love one another." Love is not a mood or a caprice. It is a duty. It gets its greatness and its sovereignty from the soul of duty which is in it. There are sensitive souls which have tortured themselves because they could not serve from a sense of buoyant and joyous love. Christ does not ask it. He asks us to do our duty in the strength of God. We do not need to want to tell the truth, or to be unselfish, or to go as foreign missionaries. It is good if we do feel a spontaneous joy in duty. But that is secondary. The duty is the supreme thing, and the doing of it will produce the right feelings in time. If it does not, it is of little consequence, if only we have done steadily and honestly what it was our duty to do. For this, as it is the noblest element and the highest motive, is also the one adequate rule of life, "What is right?" "What ought I?" This, and not temperance or taste, which may or may not be what they should, is the complete law of life and action and being.

Obedience to the law of duty is the only way to clear up our intellectual confusion and perplexities. "Most true is it," says Carlyle, in a familiar quotation, "as a wise man teaches us, that 'doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action.' On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the

dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to us was of invaluable service. 'Do the duty that lies nearest thee,' which thou knowest to be a duty. Thy second duty will already have become clearer."

This is certainly a law throughout life. If I have doubt as to my ability to learn to swim, I can never resolve the doubt by standing on the bank and arguing about it. It can only be cleared away by my going into the water and making the effort. And so in higher things. I can never settle the question of the existence of God or of the truth of Christianity by speculation. Even if I am satisfied that the results of my speculation prove the existence of God and the truth of Christianity, both God and Christianity will still be unrealities to me without action. I must venture out upon God. I must put Christianity to the test of life. I must do my duty. And if I do my duty, even if my speculations may have baffled me, I shall issue forth at last. Whoever will do right for right's sake and follow this as a consuming principle, will come through to God, who is the Right.

And a rigid sense of duty puts strength into life. It subdues life to a motive supreme over all other motives. Nothing else will be as strong with the man as duty, and in duty therefore he will be stronger than all that can come against him. "All that a man hath," said Satan in the book of Job, "will he give for his life." And a great many people believe that lie. For the sake of life dishonesty and falsehood may be allowed. But the root veracity in the soul of man rebels against it. In war, in a thousand tests, men die for duty. Even into the faint-hearted and the child, duty puts courage and the spirit of martyrdom. It

is the highest sovereign. Every other claim yields to it. So far as we let it in and live by it we rise into God. Done steadily, as the law of life, duty prepares men for whatever tests life may bring. These tests, which are God's examinations of the soul, come without forewarning, and we may say reverently that there is no cramming for these examinations of God. "The man's whole life precludes the single deed." We do in the crisis what the hidden principles of our career have foredoomed. There are doubtless exceptions, some real, some apparent, where a profligate life has flowered in a glorious self-sacrifice. But shirking duty in the common is no preparation for its performance in the exceptional, and the man who meets his crisis when it comes is the man who made it sure he would meet it by the solid steadiness of his common duty-seeking and duty-doing.

Fret and tempest die out in the life which is solidified and calmed by duty. Consequences may be what they will—of what consequence is it? Our course has been set for us, our star has been given us to steer by. The unseen Captain knows the rest, and the responsibility is His.

"The more we see of life," wrote Chinese Gordon from Shanghai to his sister in 1880, "the more one feels disposed to despise one's self and human nature, the more one feels the necessity of steering by the Pole Star, in order to keep from shipwreck; in a word, live to God alone. If He smiles on you, neither the smile nor frown of men can affect you. Thank God, I feel myself, in a great measure, dead to the world and its honours, glories, and riches. Sometimes I feel this is selfish; well, it may be so, I claim no infallibility, but it helps me on my way. Keep your eye on the

Pole Star, guide your bark of life by that, look not to see how others are steering, enough it is for you to be in the right way."

Peace and good conscience come from the unity of the life with duty, with the conception of life as duty, the vocation of God.

And, to speak of but one other thing, it is the law of duty which gives beauty to life. Sometimes we doubt. Duty seems harsh and domineering and gray. But it is only seeming. "I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty," wrote a young poetess, who died at the age of twenty-five, in the early part of the last century.

> "I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty,
> I woke and found that life was Duty.
> Was thy dream then a shadowy lie?
> Toil on, poor heart, unceasingly,
> And thou shalt find thy dream to be
> A truth and noonday light to thee."

It will be so because beauty is to be found in that which duty is, order, fixed principle, obedience to law.

All these results of duty-seeing and duty-doing are illustrated in the lives of the men who have been known as men of duty. They were seen in Henry Lawrence, whose classic epitaph has nerved multitudes to follow the way he went. "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty." They were seen in Chinese Gordon, whose last letter to his sister in Khartoum ends: "P. S.—I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have '*tried* to do my duty.'" They were seen in the Duke of Wellington, of whom one of Robert Louis Stevenson's favourite

quotations said, "He did his duty as naturally as a horse eats oats." They were seen in Stonewall Jackson, whom nothing swerved from what he deemed his duty even in small and trivial affairs. And soldiers are not the only men who have illustrated the iron supremacy of duty.

Missionaries have been even nobler representatives, because all their obedience to duty was personal and moral. Human love, comfort, and ambition have whispered to them in vain to turn back. Often deep disgust at the life in contact with which they had to live, and racial antipathy too deep for any overcoming, except the overcoming of duty, have protested, and perils like the soldier's perils have threatened—all in vain, against duty. Nearer home the trained nurse is every day enduring and subduing what it is not the mood of sympathy or any impulse which enables her to meet, but duty only. I know of one who was called, just after a serious illness of her own, to what she supposed was some ordinary case of need, only to find that it was a poor home where three children were sick with scarlet fever and diphtheria. There were no servants. The mother had one of the children with her in the kitchen. The home was unclean. When the nurse came to lie down for a little while at night, she found that her bed was the same which had been occupied by a fourth child who had died of scarlet fever and diphtheria three weeks before, and the bed clothing had not been changed. She stayed and nursed the family through. Why? For love's sake? All her soul revolted from the experience she was passing through. She stayed for duty and duty upheld her.

Common life is full of such faithfulness. A news-

paper article detailing the enormous sacrifice of life in the industrial progress of Pittsburgh, bore the gruesome title, "Riches Soaked in Blood." In the first five months of one year the coroner recorded 1,095 deaths, of which 344 came suddenly and violently, in the mills and railroads of the city. One life, it was declared, was sacrificed for every 50,000 tons of coal shipped, one life for every 7,000 tons of iron and steel. Why were these men placed where death met them prematurely? They were working for the support of their families or were simply busy with the necessary work of the world, and they died where duty placed them, and doing what they thought they must. Somewhere along the line of the production of every fragment of the world's wealth is the blood of a man who fell in his duty with no cry to the world for its praise, but taking what came with his duty as a matter of course.

Where did duty get the right to dominate men in this way, and what enables it to assert its right against home and life? Because it is the call of right, and what right bids us to do it is wrong not to do. And right draws its vital authority from God. God is the great personal, living right, and duty is simply His voice. That is the lofty metaphor of one of our greatest odes.

And because duty is the right thing, the will of God for man, it is sufficient. For its own sake alone it asks to be done. Itself is its own reward. It asks no other, and there is surely something pitiful about our practice in these days of rewarding and decorating men for doing their duty. Why should they not do it? Is duty something it is wonderful to find a man doing, so wonderful that he should get extra pay for it

or be given a ribboned medal? Surely Fielding's word in *Tom Thumb the Great* is nobler:

> " When I'm not thanked at all I'm thanked enough,
> I've done my duty and I've done no more."

It is simply our duty to do our duty. It is not the winning of a supererogatory merit with either God or man. It is not a matter of reward. And it is not a matter of comparison with other men's achievements. Mr. Maydole, the hammer-maker, was an expert. " I have made hammers," he told Dr. Gannett once, " for twenty-eight years." " You ought to be able to make a pretty good hammer, then, by this time," was the reply. " No, sir! " came the emphatic answer. " I never made a pretty good hammer—I make the best hammer in the United States." This was high, all but the comparison. Duty is not to do better than another man, but to do it all and to the limit in one's own line for the eye of God, not for the comparing eye of man.

This high view of duty is our deep need. There is a place for all true sentiment, for temperament and inclination, but the place of control is for duty. We need to acquire the habit of doing the next thing as duty. Duty is ever with us, and calling to us. It ought to be done by us simply because it is our duty, until the thought of evading or shirking duty will never come to us, and we do instinctively, as though nothing else were possible, that which is our duty. The habit of duty should become so fixed with us that we should see nothing but duty. There is a story of an archer who was teaching his art. The mark was a bird in a tree. " What do you see? " the archer asked the first

man who came forward to shoot. "I see a bird in a tree," said he. "Stand aside," said the archer. "What do you see?" he said to the second man. "I see a bird," replied he. "Stand aside," the archer said. "And what do you see?" he asked the third. "I see the head of a bird," said he. "Shoot," the archer cried. We should be blind to all that diverts or obscures. The things that deaden the sense of duty must have no place with us.

A new day will break in the Church and the world, in college and home, in public and private life, when men simply do their duty, unfrightened, unseduced, obedient, when they will say and live by their word, "It is my duty to be about my Father's business, and to finish the work which He gave me to do." Those men will vanquish death and hell, and, after Christ, will build the walls of the kingdom which is righteousness and duty.

2

THE OBLIVION OF GREAT WORK

SOME human fame rests on solid foundations. It represents good work which the world has recognized and agreed to remember. But most fame extends beyond the foundations which support it. A little service, or perhaps no real service at all, but only fictitious activity, or inherited privilege, or the chance of notoriety, or the larceny of the honour of other men's toil, or perhaps even positive harm cloaked or unconcealed, is the explanation of much fame. Those who win fame are few, and of these few, few deserve it. If no more good work were done in the world than meets with the reward of fame, the organized life of man would break down of anemia.

It is a simple and in every way encouraging fact that almost all the great work of the world is done in oblivion. "For example," says Newman in one of his *Parochial Sermons,* "who was the first cultivator of corn? Who first tamed and domesticated the animals whose strength we use, and whom we make our food? Or who first discovered the medicinal herbs which, from the earliest times, have been our resource against disease? If it was mortal man who thus looked through the vegetable and animal worlds, and discriminated between the useful and the worthless, his name is unknown to the millions whom he has benefited. It is notorious that those who first suggest the most happy inventions, and open a way to the secret

stores of nature—those who weary themselves in the search after Truth, who strike our momentous principles of action, who painfully force upon their contemporaries the adoption of beneficial measures, or, again, who are the original cause of the chief events in national history, are commonly supplanted, as regards celebrity and reward, by inferior men. Their works are not called after them nor the arts and systems which they have given to the world. Their schools are usurped by strangers, and their maxims of wisdom circulate among the children of their people, forming, perhaps, a nation's character, but not embalming in their own immortality the names of their original authors."

Or consider the discoverers of new truths, or the inventors of new words in which to express and preserve them. Our knowledge is a slow growth. Here and there the man is known who added some great idea to it, but outside the range of physical science, and barring a few great thinkers and religious teachers, each addition to our store of truth and to our moral and spiritual ideals was made by some man whose name is forgotten. And who created our language? We can trace many scientific and philosophical terms to their origin, but the greater words were born in obscurity. Many bleeding hearts made the anvils on which they were beaten, but whose hearts they were, and on what heart the last blow was struck, no one can tell.

And often when great work is credited to some one man, and the world says, " He did it; here is the conspicuously useful man," if the truth were known we should perceive that he merely entered on the fruits of the labour of the unknown and forgotten. They

had wrought almost to the completion and fulfilling, and he laid on the crown. The general is the victor. But what victory would he have won but for the engineers and aides and subordinate officers and common soldiers? Columbus was the great discoverer. But who knows the names of his ships' carpenters? And before the pioneers whom the world knew were explorers whose names are not even lost because the world never had them to lose. The good work of which the world knows was only possible because it was preceded by good work of which the world knows nothing. The forgotten explorer in every sphere knows this, and comforts his heart.

"Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps that followed;
Came, a dozen men together—never knew my desert fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. They'll be called the Pioneers!

"They will find my sites of townships—not the cities that I set there.
They will rediscover rivers—not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright.

"Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
Have I kept one single nugget (barring samples)?
No, not I.

Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy."

But the great work of the world is not the work of exploration, of new discovery. It is the work of utilization, of application, of conservation. To unveil to the nation its wealth of unlimited prairie is no greater service than to settle upon a quarter section of it, and build there an American home. To do the latter well requires higher moral qualities and contributes more to the highest life of the nation. And it is the common citizen who loves honesty and truth, and will abet no wrong or falsehood, who listens and says little until the day he goes to the polls, and not the demagogue who fills the stage, who gives shape to the destiny of the nation.

And all the mightiest forces are silent; the movement of the tides, the power of the sunlight, the influence of the truth, the change wrought by education and by the Spirit of God. These make no noise. They have no fame. For the most part they do their work in oblivion, but their work is the great work of the world. Most of us realize this. We admit that these forces work without bluster and win no notoriety, but they are not secret, we say; they are open and observed, and all of us at times discern them. Yet the great things that we see are due to things that we do not see, that perhaps we should not call great if we did see them, but which are great because they contain within them the consequences which unfold from them. In the oblivion of men's secret souls the small changes are occurring, the shaping of taste, the forming of

principle, which are to lead to these outer acts. It is on this ground that Tolstoy argues against all use of intoxicants and narcotics in his essay, *Why Do Men Stupefy Themselves?*

" It seems to people," he says, " that a slight stupefaction, a little darkening of the judgment, cannot have any important influence. But to think so is as if one supposed that it may harm a watch to be struck against a stone, but that a little dirt introduced into it cannot do it any harm.

" Remember, however, that the chief work actuating man's whole life is not work done by his hands, feet, or back, but by his consciousness. For a man to do anything with feet or hands, a certain alteration has first to take place in his consciousness. And this alteration defines all the subsequent movements of the man. Yet these alterations are always minute and almost imperceptible.

" Brulof (a celebrated Russian painter) one day corrected a pupil's study. The pupil, having glanced at the altered drawing, exclaimed: ' Why, you only touched it a little bit, but it is quite another thing.' Brulof replied: 'Art begins where the tiny bit begins.' "

3

THE PARADOX OF CHRISTMAS

THE paradox of Christmas is that a day of such joy and good cheer should yet be, after all, only the celebration of a day of failure and disappointment. He who came on this day to save His people was rejected by His people. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. He who came to save the world was by the world crucified. Even the happiness of His birth was overshadowed by the necessity of flight into Egypt, and His own cries of childish content in His mother's arms were accompanied by the sobs of the innocents whom Herod slew. The life that began on this day was the life of the Man of Sorrows, who lived a lonely life, having nowhere to lay His head, though foxes had holes and birds their nests, and died a yet more lonely death. As men meditated upon the tragedy when He was gone, they said sadly, one to another, "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." This day, which for us is wholly a day of gladness, stands, when we think upon it, for a great sorrow and disappointment.

If we say that the apparent failure of Christ's earthly life, as His disciples deemed it on the day of the crucifixion, has been transformed by the glory of His resurrection, and that the growing triumph of Christ over the world has constituted a success far grander than His earthly triumph could have been, we may admit gladly that this is true; but, even so, we must

confess that the triumph is incomplete—that in our land a minority of the people acknowledge and follow Him, that by the world as a whole, His sway has not been accepted, and that Christmas still presents to us the paradox of the joy of triumph and congratulation over what is not yet a realization and success.

But this paradox is a paradox of all life, and Christmas may well suggest to us the value of a sense of failure in life. Only those lack this whose success means nothing, because it means so little. The man who does things perfectly in his own eyes usually does little worth while. It is the man whose ideal will not let him realize it, whose dream always recedes, whose standards are so lofty that he never attains them, who mourns accordingly, "I always fail; I never reach my goal; there is always something higher than I can reach," who does the world's best work, and lifts it on toward its goal. The glory of Christmas is not that it tells of a great and complete success nineteen hundred years ago, but that it recalls to us a life that was a prophecy more even than an attainment, a prediction more than an achievement, and that looks on toward something complete and triumphant beyond all present failure and imperfection.

It is only a sense of failure that saves our ideals for us, as it alone is valid evidence of their exaltation. When we mourn in the dust over our blunders and shortcomings, our very tears have salvation in them. They prove that in the heavens above us, our ideals are shining. It is better to have them there above us, and to struggle on toward them, than to have them low, where we can soon attain them and stand upon them, crushing them into the dust under our feet. Only a sense of constant, present failure saves for us

a success that will some day be worth our while, when, lifted above all dust and purified, we are fit, through struggles and expectation, to sit down forever with what has been worshipped from afar.

A just sense of failure teaches us that modesty which is the chiefest beauty and also the chiefest qualification for success. How different our friends are in this! One is never conscious of shortcoming, perhaps never measures his life's attainment against his life's ideals, or has ideals so low that whatever he attains he is satisfied with as ideal enough. We are conscious in touching him of the woodenness of his life. There is no elasticity in it, no sensitiveness, none of the inner, mournful beauty of baffled longings and unfulfilled dreams. Another grieves with the sense of incompleteness, is eager for uplifting, open as the petals of a sensitive flower to all touch of sympathy and knowledge of like struggle in his fellows. He is freed from pride, because he knows that the goal is far away, and he is ready for help and for usefulness, with the readiness of a chastened heart.

And the knowledge that we have failed centres us upon God. The preacher speaks his message, and at the end shame covers him. He is conscious of having spoken it but in part, of mixing his own self-consciousness with it, of having spoken in pride of intellect or of will, of having said the words without the real outgo of his life in emotion and entreaty, or of having manufactured the emotion and entreaty from a frigid and sluggish soul. And he would fain be silent forever unto God. But it was to this end that the sense of failure came to him, that he might come out from himself, the forever-failing, unto God the perfect, the steadfast, and in Him gain poise and new power. A

sense of success would deliver us from God, and be a curse of curses to us. A sense of never realizing our ideals flings us back on Him, and we resolve to do and to be dumb, trusting Him.

We only feel our powers against resistance. Nothing teaches us so well what we can do as our failures. They teach us that we can do just up to such an achievement, but not that achievement itself. And yet sometimes our failures are their own defeat, for they show us that we need not have failed, and the next time we do not fail. Failure shows us, not only our powers, but also our limitations. And no life develops its full powers until it does realize its limits, and ceases to waste energy on the attempt to transgress them. Discovering its bounds through a sense of its failings, life thenceforth turns all its capacities into right and effective uses.

The sense of failure makes us capable of a grave and holy sense of the real soberness and meaning of life. We lay aside flippancy when we know that we have failed. There is no room any longer for shallow and careless optimism about it. We feel the stern disappointment and bitter struggle of it. As St. Paul says in Myer's poem:

> Let no man think that sudden in a minute
> All is accomplished and the work is done;
> Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it
> Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.
>
> Oh, the regret, the struggle and the failing!
> Oh, the days desolate and useless years!
> Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing!
> Stings of my shame and passion of my tears!

Even though we have often come short, and know that we are coming short now, there is Christmas joy for us. Yes, because we have failed there is special joy.

> For thence—a paradox,
> Which comforts while it mocks—
> Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail;
> What I aspired to be,
> And was not, comforts me.

4

THE DYNAMIC OF DISCONTENT

WE are often told that one reason why we should not go down to the inferior things is that they can never satisfy us. But the danger is that they may satisfy us. A boy at school may come to like evil talk and unworthy stories. When he left home such things were unnatural and distasteful to him, but he let himself down to them little by little until anything else is uncongenial to him. The inferior things have come to satisfy him. A popular lecturer told recently of having heard one woman say to another as they came away from an Ibsen play, "I do like Ibsen. He takes the hope out of life." If she spoke sincerely, it was only because she had brought herself to such an unnatural philosophy. She did not begin life with so unwholesome and untrue a view. In the days that were real and worthy it was hope which made life beautiful. If now she preferred hopelessness it was because her preferences had degenerated, and that had begun to satisfy her which formerly would have been the very depth of darkness to her.

This is the peril of the soul's freedom. The very capacity to rise involves the capacity to descend. Just as we can go forward from any attainment, discontented with it, to higher things which alone can satisfy us, so we can go backward and downward into tastes, experiences, and character which would once have been

utterly repugnant to us, but which have the dreadful power of becoming the soul's desired aim, so that we are satisfied. The soul can shrivel as well as expand. And we must beware of those who tell us that we can go down to anything we wish without fear, that we can throw off the inferior things whenever we wish and return to our native place. We cannot. The soul adapts itself to its environment, and we may become so satisfied on the low planes that we shall never wake to discontent. Then our birthright will be gone, and we shall not care to have it back again. The danger of all sin and surrender is that they may stupefy the taste and satisfy it.

And yet it is true that they can never satisfy *us*. Our own degenerated tastes may be content, but *we* can never be. There is something in each of us that can never be wholly stupefied by sin or satisfied with the inferiorities. The stamp of God upon us cannot be utterly obliterated. God made us, and we cannot completely destroy the evidence of His work. God made us for Himself, and we cannot wholly eradicate the divine purpose from our lives. Until the last, something within us will protest and struggle, perhaps feebly, but protest and struggle against our subsidence to what is inferior. Even in a rescue mission, where the wrecks of humanity which drift in on the tide seem to be broken beyond all hope, content to lie amid the wreckage, there is not one soul that has given over struggle. It may be fitful and weak. But just because men are men, the children of God, they can never be satisfied with what is not superior.

It is this struggle and discontent with all but the highest that Paul exalts as the noble duty of life and the central element of character. He had it himself.

"One thing I do," he said, "forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He was an unsatisfied man, pressing on, a seeker after the larger things. He tells us, in three passages, of the great life-ambitions which he cherished or commended. He "coveted the honour," as he put it, of preaching the Gospel in virgin fields and building on no other man's foundations. He bade the Thessalonians to covet the honour of quietness, of that balance and power and steadfastness which is the spring and substance of power. And he told the Corinthians that he coveted the honour, whether in life or in death, of being well-pleasing to Christ. He had aims above all his attainments, and he struggled to achieve them. This struggle was Christianity, in his view. Christianity was the sense of discontent with all that was low and inadequate, and the progress in Christ to the high calling of God. "Toward this I press," he said. He followed after something which shone afar. He rebelled against all satisfaction with inferiority. He called men to the same struggle. He put all this into one fine, strong appeal. "Desire earnestly the greater gifts."

It is thus unrest and longing which Christianity creates. It came to satisfy men, but to do this its first work has always been to dissatisfy men, to awaken discontent and unhappiness, to set men at variance with the conditions that had come to satisfy them.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst," said Christ. Why? "They shall be filled." And in one of His greatest utterances He cried to the procession on the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles which

was the very impersonation of unsatisfied desires, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Christianity is the foe not of ambition but of wrong ambition; not of covetousness, but of the covetousness which is idolatry; not of discontent, but of contentment with what is inferior. Our duty is to covet and strive after the best things, discouraged at no impossibility of attaining anything that we need in character or require for service. Our difficulty is not in expecting too much of Christ, but in not asking enough. We are too easily satisfied with what is mediocre or unworthy. We are content with a measure of achievement, with limitations to our powers, which are far below the will of God for us.

The best known psychologist in America not long before his death wrote an article for one of our magazines on "The Powers of Men," in which as the level of common psychology he pointed out the shameful contentment of most men with lives of fractional efficiency. "As a rule," said he, "men habitually use only a small part of the powers which they actually possess and which they might use under appropriate conditions. Every one is familiar with the phenomenon of feeling more or less alive on different days. Every one knows that on any given day there are energies slumbering in him which the incitements of that day do not call forth, but which he might display if these were greater. Most of us feel as if a sort of cloud weighed upon us, keeping us below our highest notch of clearness in discernment, sureness in reasoning, or firmness in deciding. Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and phys-

ical resources. In some persons this sense of being cut off from their rightful resources is extreme, and we then get the formidable neurasthenic and psychasthenic conditions, with life grown into one tissue of impossibilities, that so many medical books describe.

" Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives usually far within his limits, he possesses powers of various sorts which he habitually fails to use. He energizes below his *maximum,* and he behaves below his *optimum.* In elementary faculty, in coördination, in power of *inhibition* and control, in every conceivable way, his life is contracted like the field of vision of an hysteric subject—but with less excuse, for the poor hysteric is diseased, while in the rest of us it is only an inveterate *habit*—the habit of inferiority to our full self—that is bad."

"Awake, thou that sleepest." "Arise from the dead." " Covet the best." These are the cries of Christianity to men.

" But," men often say, " what is the use of coveting and struggling after *gifts?* And Paul explicitly says that these higher things are gifts. If they are gifts, they are in the power of the giver." The reply is twofold. First, who is the Giver? It is He of whom Jesus explicitly said that if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, He is far readier to give the best. And in a great parable Jesus openly encouraged us to seek the best from Him with tireless and undiscourageable importunity. And, secondly, perhaps we have them already, and are simply blind to our own possessions. Are not all things ours in Christ? Are not all treasures already in Him? All that we need to do is to claim them, to possess what we possess, to live upon our own estates, to joy in the

greatness of God who has made Himself and His sufficiency ours in Christ. From all contentment with a mere bit of the boundless wealth of God in Christ, or from all debased subsidence of soul in inferior things, let us rise up. Let it be high. Let the soul go free to its own lofty joy, and inherit its strength.

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things,
Toward Heaven, thy native place.
Sun and moon and stars decay,
Time shall soon this earth remove;
Rise, my soul, and haste away
To seats prepared above.

"Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
Both speed them to their source;
So my soul, derived from God,
Pants to view His glorious face,
Forward tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace."

5

THE CHALLENGE OF ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION

BEGIN to see a great obstacle before me in the way of my preaching," wrote Joseph Hardy Neesima, the founder of the Doshisha, to Mr. Alpheus Hardy from Copenhagen in 1872, when he was in Europe with the Iwakura Embassy, " for the most of our educated men in Japan are falling into infidelity. But I am happy in a meditation on the marvellous growth of Christianity in the world, and believe that if it finds any obstacles it will advance still faster and swifter, as a stream does run faster when it does find any hindrances on the course." And he adds, revealing the spirit which is in all true men facing opposition, " Oh, what a pleasant thing it is that we can rely on the hand of the living God. He will make a great use of us humble vessels in His household, if we simply remain faithful to Him."

Obstacles have never impeded the growth of Christianity. They have only stimulated it. Over all the difficulties springing from social and political conditions and climates and imperfect facilities of travel and communication, the Christian faith has moved from the beginning steadily outward and forward. The natural hindrances to the spread of a new religion it met and unhesitatingly overcame. But it met also the fiercest moral opposition. Great interests, the great-

est interests of the world, assailed it and tried to break it down. They tried in vain. The "stream does run faster," as Neesima said in his quaint English, "when it does find any hindrances on the course."

The attempt to suppress the religion only called attention to it. It could not have received better advertisement. In the cities where it had its strongholds the persecutions made it talked about, focused men's minds on it, awakened their curiosity about it. And they scattered the believers and the news of the new faith over the towns and country districts. The persecutions of the apostolic church had this effect, and later on, Harnack says, "the severe persecutions of Decius, Valerian, Diocletian and Maximus Daza drove thousands of Christians to take refuge in the country; the last-named emperor, moreover, deliberately endeavoured to eject Christians from the towns and condemned thousands to hard labour in the mines throughout the country. We know, thanks to the information of Dionysius of Alexandria and Eusebius, that in such cases communities sprang up in the country districts for the purpose of worship." The attempt to suppress the new faith only spread it. The same result always follows persecution.

For all use of force to coerce opinion or to destroy faith is unavailing; it reacts to confirm what it is intended to destroy, what men really think or believe they think or believe not because of any external constraint, but on grounds of reason or spiritual experience. And these are beyond the reach of physical violence. Physical violence or any form of threat or intimidation only throws the inner moral conviction back the more deeply upon its true springs, and verifies and confirms it. And when once this has hap-

pened, and a man has suffered for his faith, he is thenceforth in a world where persecution has no meaning to him; or rather indeed, it has a blessed and inspiring meaning, making him ready to be faithful to death as his Master who endured His cross and despised His shame was faithful.

Thus when men have suffered for their faith it becomes doubly precious to them, and they become ready to die for that for which they have dared to live. The exaltation of their loyalty makes yet more dear the convictions which have given them the strength to be strong. One of the finest of Violet Oakley's wonderful pictures of William Penn's career, on the walls of the Governor's room in the Pennsylvania State Capitol, are the words in which Penn after his arrest for violation of the conventicle act addressed the Lieutenant of the Tower of London: "I would have thee and all other men know that I scorn that religion which is not worth suffering for and able to sustain those who are afflicted for it."

A persecuted cause makes resistless appeal to manhood. To be sure, it sifts out the insincere and cowardly, but it leaves behind a force of men all the stronger for that winnowing. And in these men it brings out all that is noblest and most daring. It strikes open the deeps in their souls. It weakens the grip of material things, and gives the sovereignty of the life into the hands of pure spiritual principle. Those who try to suppress a movement otherwise than by free moral persuasion and by the light of truth, only feed the movement's life. They strip it of its weaknesses, and increase its power by cutting away the elements that separate it from the fountains of truth's life in God. What was a human association

or movement of men is thus seen to be a great cause of God, worthy of any sacrifice. "Courage yet," writes James Renwick, the soul of the Cameronian Societies in the days of the Covenant and the "Killing Times." "Courage yet, for all that is come and gone. The loss of men is not the loss of the cause. What is the matter though we all fall? The cause shall not fall."

The attempt at suppression brings out the warrior nature in man. God put it there, and God means it to fulfill its ministry. Life is not meant to be looked at as a career of peace where there are no foes to fight, or as a truce with foes with whom we make compacts of agreement. In times of complacency, when no questions are raised among men, life may seem a peaceful thing; but that is only because its real issues are asleep. Once let them awake, and cowardice and evil will begin their campaign of suppression. Then, too, courage and righteousness will answer back. The attempt at suppression is the blessed challenge which wakens the soldier passion in the soul. Then the truth spreads. For it is in two ways that right knowledge and true faith are extended: by pervasion and by invasion. The great truths move out subtly over men's minds. From age to age their thoughts are widened with the process of the suns. But truth is a warrior. It invades the haunts of error. It loves a combat. It rejoices to see its foes. The effort to suppress it is needed to call all its faculties into play. They need only room and an adversary. Truth like strength shows its glory against resistance. It prevails by conquest.

This is the nature of truth. The harder the opposition it encounters, the more solid its impact. Per-

secution does not more truly bring out the noblest qualities in man than it brings out the fulness and power of the truth. You cannot stop the truth or overthrow it. The harder you try, the more triumphantly truth rises up and presses forward. In 1868 the first converts were baptized, at Chieng Mai, among the Laos people. Two of them were at once arrested, and confessed before the authorities that they had abandoned Buddhism. The death yoke was then put around their necks, and a small rope was passed through the holes in their ears (used for ear-rings by all natives), and carried tightly over the beam of the house. After thus being tortured all night they were again examined in the morning, but steadfastly refused to deny their Lord and Saviour even in the face of death. They prepared for execution by praying to Him, closing with the words "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Being then taken off to the jungle, they were clubbed to death by the executioner, and one of them, not dying quickly enough, was thrust through the heart by a spear. All of the seventy-three descendants of one of those martyrs are now members of the church.

Men can do nothing against the truth. They can break themselves upon it. They can rob their own lives of its blessing. But they cannot crush it, and they cannot stay it. Let us serve it with a new confidence and a new courage. For God is with us. Who are they that be against us?

V. THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD

1. *Can We Imitate God?*
2. *Christianity and the Common People.*
3. *Unknown in the Midst.*
4. *Simon Peter's Claim to Greatness.*
5. *Heaven Not Inferior to Earth.*

1

CAN WE IMITATE GOD?

AT first thought the idea of imitating God seems preposterous. Imitation of any one seems to us discreditable. When we see in any man traits of character or methods of action or manners or ways which are not natural but have been imitated from some one else, we are either amused or displeased. This is, however, a hasty and undiscriminating prejudice. Imitation is unworthy only when we imitate what is not in our class. When a servant imitates her mistress, when a man who works honestly for his living imitates a man of indolence, when we put on an air that is false to us, the imitation is unreal and discreditable. Many qualities may be beyond us. To imitate them is merely to make ourselves ridiculous. But are not these just the forms of imitation of which we are guilty if we imitate God? Is He not a being entirely beyond us? What is there in common between us and God which warrants our attempt to reproduce Him? "I imitate God!" men say. "Take your preposterous blasphemy away. I have hard work being a decent man. What am I that I should set out to resemble God?"

Those even may take this view who do not shrink from the thought of imitating Christ. Thomas à Kempis may be acceptable and helpful to them. "But," they say, "that is different. Jesus was a man like us. To be sure, He was unlike any other man

that ever lived, but His perfections were human perfections, or they were divine perfections in human nature. Whatever He was and did we admit as an ideal for all humanity, and our one aim in life is to follow Him faithfully and to imitate His character. We accept John's declaration. 'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' But imitating God is an entirely different matter. Jesus was a man, flesh of our flesh, tempted as we are, hungering and thirsting even as we hunger and thirst. We believe that He was God, too, but God in the flesh, God offered for human imitation, not God the infinite and omnipotent one. If Paul had said, 'Be ye imitators of Christ,' which is what he does say elsewhere, we could have accepted it, but when he says, 'Be ye imitators of God,' he exacts an impossible standard and summons us to an impossible undertaking."

And yet this is just what Paul did say, "Be ye imitators of God;" and if the idea at first thought seems preposterous, on second thought it is seen to be obvious and necessary.

For what is man's main business in life, his chief end, as the Westminster Catechism calls it, but "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever"? And what does it mean to glorify God? The glory of God is His character. To glorify Him is to praise His character, no doubt. But what is real praise? It is not mere verbal commendation. It is moral imitation. We truly praise that which we seek to copy and reproduce. We do not glorify God, accordingly, by ritual or architecture or by great theology which recounts His attributes. We can elaborate ritual and build cathedrals and speculate on the divine attributes with-

out once glorifying God. He glorifies Him who makes a holy and godlike home for Him in his heart, and so lives before men that they think they have seen God. "A saint," says Dr. David Cairns, "is a man who makes it easier for the rest of us to believe in God."

And what is sin but failure to imitate God? "Sin is any want of conformity unto or any transgression of the law of God." And the law of God is the way of God—the law of God embodied in His character. God's law is the way God Himself acts. His law of truth or purity is simply the description of His own method of action. Sin on our part is any deviation from this. It is any failure to imitate and resemble God.

But although obedience to law is imitation of God, it is not by any such legal challenge that Paul calls us to be like God. It is on the ground of our sonship. "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." That is a thought that takes away all the irreverence and absurdity of the conception of imitating God. If we are God's dear children, with His nature in us, made in His likeness, nothing can be more natural and right than that we should be like our father. When a boy imitates a good father, he is not seeking to do something artificial and unreal. He is seeking his own nature. It is as sons that we are to seek to resemble God.

And this is for all Christians the most practical and helpful of all prescriptions and commands. They do not need to go hither and thither seeking out teachers and wisdom among men. The word is nigh us, nearer even than our hearts. God is nearer than our thought of Him. And we are simply to be like Him. We do not need codes of reform, lists of virtues which are to

be practised, ethical systems to be thought through and fitted on. All that we need is just to imitate God as dear children.

The devout Mohammedan names over to himself as one of his spiritual exercises the ninety-nine beautiful names of God—The Merciful, The Compassionate, The King, The Holy, The Peace, The Faithful, The Protector, The Mighty, The Repairer, The Great, The Maker, The Fashioner, The Forgiver, The Dominant, The Bestower, The Provider, etc. There are earnest Moslems to whom this repetition of the names of God found in the Koran is a real help, drawing the soul toward the glory that God is. But to imitate God is an alien idea to Mohammedanism. God is separate, inapproachable. They can exalt God and worship Him, but it is not by imitating Him as His dear children.

Therefore only Christ opens up a way of such access to God as makes us reverently familiar with God, as children with their father. And Christ has done more than this. He has carried us far past mere repetitious names for God, and has shown Him to us in His own being as truth and love and life.

But Jesus Christ did more than reveal the Father to us. And it was needful that more should be done. For the seeing of the Father's love and life in the Son of Man would only make more hopeless for us the imitating of that wonderful revelation. It is Jesus that makes us see clearly that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." There is nothing in "me" worth preserving or working on. Then comes the provision that man could not have dreamed of: He who knows the Father, who is the express image of the Father, He it is who will enter into me, will

supplant "me," so that "it is no longer I that live, but Christ." Now I can imitate God!

Have we to-day in anything resembled God? Has any one who did not see God in this dark world, and who looked for a sign of Him, been able to see in us any trait of His character, imitated and reproduced? Wherein do we need to resemble Him? Our own hearts will tell us. And when they have told us, we may joyfully recall Paul's summons, which is a reassurance that out of all our unlikeness we may come to the very likeness and beauty of God, in Christ.

"Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come,
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

"Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come,
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress to jubilant psalm,
Jesus, I come to Thee."

2

CHRISTIANITY AND THE COMMON PEOPLE

WHEN God became man He became a common man, one of the multitude of the common people. Our Lord never got away nor sought to get away from His associations with common humanity. It was in the will of God for His Son, and we may be sure was in the will of the Son for Himself, that He should be lowly-born, with the kindly beasts round about Him and a manger cradle holding Him close to the great Mother Earth that lay beneath Him and to the common human heart that beat about Him. He grew up amid common human boys and in a simple peasant home. Even after the consciousness of His mighty mission had stirred within Him, and He had learned to speak of the affairs of His Father with which He was charged, we read that He went down with the humble folk whom He called His parents and resumed His common toil. He lived His whole life among the common folk, and met the common end with companions in death whose names no man knows.

It is clear that this identification of Himself with the mass of common men—men without social preeminence, without riches, without the fame that springs from the possession and the exercise of organizing power—was deliberately chosen. There were no limitations in God prescribing the form which the Incarnation should take. Jesus might have been born in

any social level or in the way of any natural advantages. He might have come as the son of Cæsar, as a man of wealth, or as a master of organization. He rejected all these forms of influence, and deliberately subjected Himself to conditions which deprived Him of any method of action except simple personal influence. This is the last thing we should have descended to in His place. One of the first things we would do in setting out to undo all wrong and establish all righteousness would be to enlist legislation and the forces of government which make legislation operative. We must change the order of society, we maintain. Jesus discouraged every effort to politicalize His mission, and He entirely divorced His method from every suspicion or possibility of political entanglement.

Next to the strong conviction that without legislation nothing of a radical or adequate character can be done, is our modern axiom that money is indispensable. We speculate on the power of wealth to produce moral and spiritual reforms. We make plans for the extension of the Kingdom of God, which need only wealth behind them to revolutionize the world. With wealth, we say, unconsciously altering a great saying of Christ's, nothing is impossible. Indeed, the logic of our attitude often would drive us to complete the parody: "With God it is impossible, but not with money; for with money all things are possible." Jesus never spoke thus. Such ideas never entered His thought. Money in any capacity, least of all as a method of influence, was of no interest to Him. His references to it are usually contemptuous. The idea of using gold to alter character and to make dead men live would have seemed pitiful to Him.

Organization, which is the third great reliance of

our day, He treated also with a silent indifference. Our great generals and engineers and merchants and statesmen to-day are the organizers, the men who arrange men and classify them and fix their grades and orders and swing them as a mechanism. Jesus, however, was not a mechanic in this sense. He had earned His bread by a trade, but religion was not a trade to Him. He was not a drillmaster nor a manipulator of men. When His disciples urged Him to set up some sort of an organization and assign them their place in it, He refused, and He died at last without having done anything whatever to assure the permanence of His movement by organization.

Now legislation and wealth and organization are all legitimate and noble agencies for the accomplishment of right ends. Men act with propriety when they seek to subordinate these forces to the ends of the Kingdom of God. All I urge here, however, is that Jesus did not do so. He was neither a political nor a financial figure. He just went about in a simple fashion, talking to people, telling them His ideas, giving help here and there in a tender, sympathetic way; doing good generously, but by no means indiscriminately; laying out His life upon any responsive life He could find; "catching men," to use His own expression, and catching them not in multitudes or by great orations, but in quiet, individual ways; and then He died, and that was the end of it. Was that the end of it? We see now that what was going on so quietly and unostentatiously there in a secluded corner of the Roman Empire was the greatest upheaving movement of all history, and it was precisely because the Lord chose to be a common man, wrought on common human life as His material, wrought with a common human life as

His agency, and found in the elements of common life the methods necessary to His ends.

The message that He brought was also a message to common men. He burdened the human heart with no philosophies. He dealt, to be sure, in mysteries, but they were mysteries only to the wise, not to the simple or the childlike. He took joy in this. "I thank thee, Father," He said, in the East's large way of reading everything back into the Divine Will—"I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes." The speculations of the scholars of His day are forgotten. What passed for science then is as a dream that men do not remember that they dreamed; but the music which His master-hand drew from the chords of common human hearts and from the depths of His own is sounding still as the increasing melody of time, and the tales that He told, with their bottomless lessons, still

> "Enter in at lowly doors,
> Which they may read who bind the sheaf,
> Or build a house or dig the grave,
> Or those wild eyes which watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef."

He learned a common man's trade, and ever since the common man has looked more nobly on this toil. Plato deemed it right to despise men whose employment did not permit them to devote themselves to their friends and to the state. According to Aristotle, all forms of labour which require physical strength are degrading to a freeman. Cicero declared: "The mechanic's occupation is degrading. A workshop is

incompatible with anything noble." Christ came as a mechanic, and identified Himself with the plain people. Other social reformers have begun at the apex of the pyramid; Christ began at the base.

"'Isn't this Joseph's son?' Aye, it is He.
'Joseph the carpenter'—same trade as me!
I thought as I'd find it, I knew it was here,
But my sight's getting queer.

"I don't know right where as His shed might ha' stood,
But often, as I've been a-planing my wood,
I've took off my hat just with thinking of He
At the same work as me."

Christ chose His agents from the common ranks. They were men unheard of until He made them. Even Paul would have gone his way into oblivion with other men like him, who were the best that his race and religion had produced, except that Christ passed through him and hurled what was uncommon and exceptional in him behind his soul of common humanity, and made this the master of that. It was as the common man's religion that Christianity moved out upon the world and made its way from rower to rower on the benches of the triremes, from workman to workman in the field and in the shop, and from woman to woman grinding at the mill; from chavadar to chavadar on the long caravan routes across the plains, from slave to slave, until at last this mighty sowing burst through and shook like Lebanon.

Just as Jesus had gloried in the rich relation of His message and His mission to the full common human life, so Paul gloried in the power which he had dis-

covered in Christianity sufficient to lift the lowest human weakness that trusted in God beyond the highest human strength that trusted only in itself. What did it matter how much the power and learning and wealth of his day or of any day arrayed itself against the truth of God, which is the truth of common humanity? We see the strongest man of the first Christian century glorying in his discovery of a strength that made his strength ludicrous. In the first chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Where," asks he, "is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? . . . Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

If these principles are true, have we not erred often in our estimates of human greatness and influence and service? Does not the simplest acquaintance with the facts of history show us that we have erred? And if this is the lesson of history, ought not the principle which it embodies to be more practically recognized by us to-day? Do we not often lead ourselves on to wrong tracks by our exaltation of the importance of what we call strong men and strategic personalities and "key men"? Did Jesus work on this principle?

He spent hours talking with inconsequential people; a whole afternoon of priceless spiritual teaching He would lavish on a stray woman by a wellside; and it is clear from the Gospels that of most of the things He said and did there is no written record—that is, on paper—but there is a record written deep as the grave and high as heaven on the face of humanity.

Consider Paul's method of action. There was a time when he thought John Mark unfit, and he does not emasculate his speech in dealing with many a common man; but his measure of what was common and uncommon was not the world's measure: it was not determined by considerations of a man's standing or strategic influence or political position or widely extended fame. With Paul the uncommon man who was unsurrendered to Christ was the commonest of the common, and the commonest of the common who lost himself in Christ had already begun to be marked by that greatness which does not go up from men into God, but which comes down from God into men.

As a matter of fact, the real work of the world today, as always, is the work which common men are doing—Sunday-school teachers whom no one ever heard of, or will hear of, men whose only work for Christ is to live faithfully and to speak of Him with loving commendation to their fellows, the victories won over sin and weakness in the night, with no eye but God's to mark; the work of the missionary or the village teacher far away from the newspapers and the advertisements of the financial solicitor and the exploiter of this movement or that organization—these are the real thing. Thank God they are, and thank God also that the same grace that makes these the real thing can save and find a place for and make use

of the wise men after the flesh, the mighty and the noble and the things that are, if only they will turn again and become as little children of the common humanity which only a vain imagination in them thinks that they have risen above.

3

UNKNOWN IN THE MIDST

THE untrustworthiness of conventional judgments was never more clearly shown than in the failure of men to appraise and appreciate Jesus. It was not unnatural at first, when He was still unknown, before He had begun the mighty works and the great words which were to startle His nation and ultimately to shake the world. But the inability of the world to discern and value Jesus continued even after He had begun His public mission. He died misunderstood, and so much underestimated that He who was the King of kings, the soul of divine purity, the crown and fulfillment of a nation's history, and the fountain of a new life for the world, was flung out by humanity and shamed by a felon's execution. What happened to Jesus almost annihilates our respect for human judgment. Here was the greatest, the best, the most persuasive character that ever lived. The world absolutely missed Him.

The same thing happened to Paul, following afar in the footsteps of the Saviour. A few recognized him. He did not wholly lack the discovery of friendship. And now his influence penetrates the whole life of humanity. The work that he did for Christ and for human life we still toil at. Like pygmies we grope around his massive thoughts and build our little systems like ladders against his stature, and our heresies like cobwebs across the pathway of his power. But

his own day took no notice of him. Tolstoy tells us with what amazement a prominent Roman of the first century would learn to-day that the world now regards Paul, a man of whom he never heard, as the greatest Roman citizen, and that the letters of this wandering Jew are the best known and most widely circulated literature of all that that century produced.

Such instances as these, and our own observation of life, should suffice to show us how often real greatness is unappreciated and unobserved. Sometimes it is because the greatness is still concealed, power latent, but to be developed later.

Little Wellesley running about on the school playground appears only to God's eye as the Iron Duke who is to close one epoch and open a new one in the world's history. Life is needed to bring out what was there all the time, unknown in the midst. But often even when it is brought out it is not noticed or it is undervalued. There died recently, in a country town in Pennsylvania, a simple, devoted man whose life passion was the care of neglected children. His meat and drink were the sacrifices he made for others. He worked at his problem with the prophetic insight of love, and drew out the best project of child conservation which has yet been devised. But he passed to and fro as an unknown man in the midst.

This has become almost the essential principle of the world's true work—namely, that it should be unnoticed, anonymous. It should make us very reverent and considerate toward all life. If men so misvalued Christ, if they so ignored Paul, if they so habitually discover long after that the great work has been done by unnoticed lives, we should beware how we cast out that which we may some day find God had brought to

the kingdom for this very hour. And we should lay aside also all our despair of ourselves and our work because we and they seem so futile and unavailing. God is doing far more with us than we know, and we may well rejoice and take courage if we find that we and what we work for are, like our Lord and His work, an imprisoned light sure of itself but rejected by the surrounding nighttime.

But this comfort belongs to those only who apply these cautions to their own attitude and outlook on life, and who are awake in consequence to detect life's unrecognized responsibilities. All about us is neglected work waiting to be done. The spirit of a school, the tone of the family life, the subjects of our daily conversation, the mind and character of the nation—all these are waiting to be lifted from the level of drudgery to the level of the glory of the will of God. And here, too, is life's rejected discipline, the very thing we need most and most shirk. It is waiting for us unknown in the midst. "A man from Galilee," we say of it. " The prophetic thing does not come out of Galilee." But back of that garb of Galilee is the glow of the gold of God. Tear off the coverings of these scorned disciples, these common tasks, and you will find the very greatness you have dreamed of, the contentment of the worth that is holiest.

How obvious the great discoveries are after they have been made! Any Italian can come to America now for a few dollars—since Columbus came. Schoolboys laugh at the fear of the ancients. We can do so much that other generations could not do! We look back pityingly upon them. Yes, but looking back upon us, the future will say, " How could they have missed it? It was under their very eyes and they

never saw it." Even after John had said, "Yonder, he is. Behold the man I told you of," they did not see. Shall it be so with us? Why do we not see now in the midst of us what is here, what the future will see was here?

Men err so easily in their valuations. That after all is one of the greatest curses of sin. Direct sin is dreadful—the deliberate choice, between two valuations, of the lower. But the indirect effects of sin are equally dreadful—the incapacity to value correctly, or the blindness which chooses without settling values. Men take the present which hides the future bigger thing that they lose. Men run away after the future which hides the present bigger thing, the very thing God has sent them. The seen little hides the unseen great. The cheap and popular supplants the true. "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Indeed, the very test of life is the power to recognize the unknown in the midst, to catch the hint of the Baptist, and at the first opportunity to say to the Unknown One, "Rabbi, where abidest thou?" The pathos of life is that men will not do this; that, instead, they leave the Unknown One a stranger without the door. Are we doing this? Under our very eyes as Christian men, may there not be opportunities of service, possibilities of spiritual experience, elevations of character, appeals of human need which are to us now what Christ was in the throng? "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not."

4

SIMON PETER'S CLAIM TO GREATNESS

UR Lord Himself stated Simon Peter's claim to greatness when He declared, regarding his great confession: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

The thing that made the apostle great, in other words, was his spiritual perception. He saw the truth. He did not see it because of any superior intellectual gifts of his own. He had not arrived at it by any patient investigation. It was not the product of any train of reasoning or speculation. The Spirit of God had revealed it to him. In one sense, he deserved no credit for this. Any one else might have received the same revelation if he had had a heart to hear it. But that was precisely the point. Simon had the heart. He was susceptible to the offer of the truth of the divine Spirit to the soul of any man who would welcome it. He welcomed it. He was great by having a great spiritual faith, a vision of the truth.

There were other occasions on which Jesus was generous in His commendation. He praised the woman

who with heedless love broke the alabaster box over His feet. He praised Mary, who had chosen the good part of spiritual aspiration. He expressed His pleasure at the presence of little children around Him. He was unreserved in His approbation of the devoutness and purity of character of Nathanael. But no other praise of His was so comprehensive and full as His grateful recognition of the spiritual discernment of Simon. His satisfaction with it extends beyond Simon. It pours a glory over Simon's father: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of John." As Daniel Webster's fame immortalized his father, so Simon's faith has exalted his father forever. The father whose son can believe so nobly deserves to be remembered with him. And the satisfaction of Jesus reaches forward as well as backward. Such faith merits large employment, and in language of measureless significance Jesus suggests how much of blessing and influence will flow onward from such a confession.

We know in some measure from this how highly Jesus esteemed the capacity for spiritual vision,—a heart to discern the truth. Indeed, this is the first essential of great character. It is necessary to the right beginning of a true life. The first thing is for the sheep to know and follow his shepherd, and, if the sheep does not recognize and respond to his shepherd's voice, how can the right relationship of life be established at all? There are men who lack the capacity of spiritual perception. Sometimes it is atrophied in them from disuse. What might be called the subliminal power of the Gospel, which comes to them with their racial inheritance, may mark them as men of high moral characters and ideals, like Mr. Darwin and Professor Huxley, but they lack the spiritual vision.

"Huxley," says President Schurman, "with the fine frenzy for 'natural knowledge' that possessed him throughout all his work and controversy, never realized how much of what is best in life lies outside that restricted territory. . . . His horizon was restricted to his field of labour; he saw the natural world, but not as the supranatural which envelops it. The hand was subdued to what it worked in: he grasped the judgments of the intellect, but missed the intimations of the spirit in man." And Darwin wrote quite frankly to Hooker, "I am not sure whether it would not be wisest for scientific men quite to ignore the whole subject of religion." These are men, accordingly, who ignore deliberately, or who are unconscious of, the existence of the whole higher range of life. Jesus' remark to Simon indicates that He regards the discernment of the spiritual as the supreme thing, the real sign of greatness. Judged by Jesus' standard, there are many humble people to whom God is real, and whose souls have found in Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, who are by the real tests of life of far more exalted character and far nobler greatness of nature than the most learned or sagacious or scientific scholars, who understand the things that are seen and temporal, but who are blind men toward the light infinite and unfading.

But Simon did more than discover Christ. He fearlessly avowed his faith in what he had inwardly felt. Now, it is one thing to suspect a truth within, and even to be certain of it; it is another to commit one's self openly to it. Simon had come near to the conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Perhaps he had not wholly settled down upon it until the very moment. It was Jesus, and not Simon, who de-

clared that the view to which Simon now committed himself was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Simon was not aware of having reached this opinion in any unusual way. He just felt it, and, with or without any hesitancy or timidity, he burst out with it. How much this must have meant to Simon similar experiences in our lives have taught us. Perhaps we can remember the very occasion when we sat debating the question of Christ in our own minds. "Is He the Son of God, or not? What is He?" we were asking ourselves. And, as we thought, we found that more than just mere opinion was involved. Mind and heart and will were fused in common striving after truth, and then in a moment we rose up and confessed Him. We had been seeing Him dimly, but with enlarging clearness. But the act sealed the vision. The twilight broadened into the day. We confessed Christ as men, and we were become new men in Christ. The leap of faith in utterance confirms the vision of faith in the soul.

The spiritual perception recognized, accepted, surrendered to, avowed, delighted Jesus. This He deemed the worthiest thing to be found in life. "But is not the Golden Rule worthier or the two commandments which comprise the Law and the Gospel?" asks the temper of our day. "Does Jesus care so much for what we think of Him as He does for our being like Him and serving one another in love? How does it matter what our opinions are, if only we have Christ's spirit, and do His will?" Being like Christ, and having His spirit, mean first of all the love of the truth, the search for the truth, the openness of soul to the truth, the spiritual vision which He possessed. We do not have His spirit, we are not like Him, we do

not do His will, if we have no perception of the truth. To the extent that we are blind to the truth which He taught and which He was, we are deficient in His spirit, are unlike Him in His character, and fail to discern His will. For the very work of God, of which our day talks so much as the essence of Christianity, is, as Jesus declared, to believe on Him whom God hath sent.

Jesus went on at once to make this clear. This recognition and confession of Simon's was to constitute the great foundation of the Christian Church. It was not on Simon that the Church was to be built. As a matter of simple historic fact, it was built rather on Paul. But Paul and Simon both were built upon the one foundation on which they laid the Church. Other foundation, indeed, said Paul, can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Never was there a day when it was more important to make this great truth clear and to stand fast for it. The tendency is strong to resolve Christ into thin air, to evaporate His doctrine, to make Him nothing but a spirit of sanctity and light. "What you think of Christ is of little consequence," we are told, "if you have the Christian spirit." In many of our colleges, especially for women, there is powerful opposition to any Christian organizations which assume or require any positive view of Christ. It is desired rather that all who love the things of the spirit, and who believe in the reality of a spiritual world, and who, not to be so exacting even as this, are opposed to a purely materialistic view of life, may meet together on the basis of these common sympathies without introducing any of the divergence of view which will follow the opening of the question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose

Son is He? Who do men say that I am?" But Jesus asked these questions. These were the vital questions with Him. They are not less vital to-day. He was elated to meet with Simon's spiritual perception and positive confession. He desires no less now.

And Jesus did not deem it a mere matter of words, of metaphysics, of intellectual opinion. What men thought of Him was the evidence and measure of their apprehension of God, their spiritual discernment of truth, their honest search after it with the innocence and childlikeness of heart, the candid acceptance of facts, and the courageous venture of faith, which are represented to us in Simon Bar-Jonah, blessed of Christ. And, furthermore, on what men think of Christ in the end depends their sympathy with His spirit, their performance of His works, their doing of His will. Where are the foreign missions of the churches that cannot speak with Simon Peter's faith? Here at home men are constantly upborne by the living power of the faith of others, as a flock of close-flying birds will bear up the body of a dead comrade, as the Little People of the Jungle upbore the heavy bodies of the slain Red Dogs of the Deccan. When any great body of men see with Simon's soul and speak with Simon's lips, a fountain of life and power has been opened whose waters will carry refreshment to all, even to those who do not drink of the living waters themselves. But wipe out Simon Peter's faith, and the fruits of the Gospel will soon wither from the trees whose roots are slain.

This is not narrowness. It is the truth, if Christ is true. It is only error that is without boundaries in this world,—error which has its boundaries in the other world, where truth is limitless and free.

This is not exclusiveness. Any one can be great by this standard. Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, not to Simon alone. He was this to Simon because He was this in reality. We may realize it and confess it as Simon did. The supreme greatness in the world is the greatness of confessing Christ.

The world did not believe this then. The world does not believe it now. Loyalty to Christ in Paul was called bigotry, madness, narrowness. The same jealousy for Him to-day will meet with the same description with which it met then. Men are generous in their admiration of Jesus, but they halt at Simon's confession.

Why? Is it want of vision to perceive, *or* a want of will to confess? Is it a want of vision *and* a want of will?

" I think, too," said General S. C. Armstrong, " that the state of the heart has as much to do with getting at . . . Bible truths as that of the head. . . . We need the spirit of little children."

5

HEAVEN NOT INFERIOR TO EARTH

THE Bible is very reserved about the future life. It gives no encouragement whatever to curious speculations about it. God knows what we need, and what we are able to understand, and He tells us just this. Doubtless we misunderstand much of what He has told us, just as the disciples misapprehended the Saviour's teaching, and when at last we see the reality we shall marvel at our stupidity and blindness. Yet it is not strange that we find it hard to conceive of the heavenly life. All our human conceptions involve the relations of time and space, but there will be no time in eternity, and no space in infinity. Yet all our language in which we must speak and think of heaven is made out of metaphors of time and space. God cannot speak to us of the eternal and infinite life except in the language of time that is not eternity, and space that is not infinity. What He has said, accordingly, we cannot always understand.

But of one thing we can be perfectly sure; that is, that heaven is not inferior to earth. We have no joys here which will not be surpassed there. We need not fear to go because we may be disappointed in God or in our blessed Saviour whom we shall meet there, or because the life of heaven will be dull and indolent. All our earthly experience of God in Christ will be transcended in heaven, and the employments and ac-

tivities of that highest service will dwarf the interests of life into insignificance. We may be confident of this from our inward moral apprehension. Earth is a mere shadow of what God would have had it. Where God's will is done, as it is done in heaven, sin is unknown, and all the sorrow and pain and weakness and separation which are the result of sin are likewise unknown. If here, in spite of sin, we have felt the joy of friendship and love, where hearts that are distinct yet draw together as one, and know one another, and possess one another, we may be sure that the heavenly life does not lack what we realize to be the one heavenly thing we have on earth.

Yet in the hour of separation earnest souls often wonder whether in the heavenly life we shall meet again and keep those we loved on earth. "I would," writes a friend, "that you could add a word of comfort to my desolate heart. After nearly forty years of most blessed and loving companionship, my wife has passed on to heaven ahead of me, and now comes the cry of my heart: 'Shall we meet again?' In all that vast concourse in heaven will it be possible ever to find our dear ones, and if it should be so, will we renew and shall we remember the earthly joys and relationships? It seems to me that heaven would not be quite complete short of this."

Indeed it would not. It would be inferior to earth. There we are to have all that was good and innocent here. And we are to have it purified of all dross and imperfection, and we are to have it forever. This is where our Christian faith is superior to the agnosticism or atheism of our day—the agnosticism that speaks in the poem of Mrs. Huxley's, from which the lines on the great agnostic's gravestone are taken:

"And if there be no meeting past the grave,
If all is darkness, silence, still 'tis rest;
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep;
For still He giveth His beloved sleep,
And if an endless sleep He wills, so best."

And the atheism which moans in James Thomson's dirge:

"What matters one brief night of dreary pain,
When after it the weary eyelids fall
Upon the weary eyes and wasted brain?
And all sad scenes and thoughts and feelings vanish
In that sweet sleep no power can ever banish,
That one last sleep which never wakes again."

The Christian heart simply knows better. "Since I last wrote you," wrote a Christian man to a friend, "my oldest child, dear little Jean, has gone to be with Jesus and Dorothy. They loved each other greatly, and the heavenly Father, in the greatness of His love, is pleased that they should be together in the 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The darlings' childish prattle is heard no more in our home, and we miss very much their loving embrace, but it is best, for they are with Him. We understand not the meaning of all these tears and heartaches, but we shall know hereafter, when again we see our darlings 'face to face,' and Jesus, who came to bind up the broken-hearted, and in whom is all hope. In all our sorrow, the blessed Saviour has been very near to us, giving such a sweet, perfect peace, and assuring our hearts that all things work together for good to them that love Him.

'Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.'

Now that more of our treasure is in heaven, and our hearts, Mrs. K. and I will contribute further to the support of His witnesses on the foreign field, so that both Dorothy and Jean may be represented."

The Christian heart speaks here. There is no certainty in the world if it is not here. "I used to reason out the proof of personal immortality," said a man, "but since my little boy came, all that reasoned proof seems to be puerile. I look at my little lad so full of faith in Jesus, and I know that he and I can never be separated, and that what we are tasting of bliss in our love is but a prophecy of the heavenly life, where we shall be, he and I, forever. I know this. I believe it with more conviction than I have as to the truth of the multiplication table or the law of gravitation." We have a right to trust elementary convictions like these.

And if the Bible nowhere explicitly states that we shall know one another and preserve our own personalities in the heavenly life, it is only because its writers never thought of anything else. Does it ever explicitly state that it is wrong to strike a little child in anger, or that one's personality remains the same in going from Asia to Europe? But the Bible implies clearly enough that we continue to be ourselves in the heavenly life. Moses and Elijah appeared at the Transfiguration. "They had the same bodies as on earth," says a recent commentator on the scenes and sayings of our Lord's life, "only they were transfigured with glory, prophetic of the resurrection body. They were recognized as Moses and Elijah, this illustrating

the fact of heavenly recognition. We shall know each other there. They were in possession of the same human faculties that they had in their life. Death and heaven do not change the constitution and individuality of the soul. The redeemed spirit is purified and glorified, but it is the same personality." And there are other illustrations in the Bible of the same sort. The continued existence of the great heroes and heroines of the faith and their long and vigilant interest in what we do is urged by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews as a motive for single-eyed devotion to Christ and to patient and uncompromising loyalty to His call. Indeed, this writer declares that these souls are waiting for us, "God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

But we are not without explicit Bible assurance as to our knowledge in the future life. Now we see through a glass darkly. Then we shall see face to face, says Paul. Now we know in part. Then we shall know even as also we are known. What could be more positive than that? God knows us by name, by character, by our real personality. Then we shall know ourselves and one another and God even as we are known. We shall not be lost in the other world in a promiscuous mist of souls. We shall know ourselves and other souls. As he looked forward, Paul knew that Christ would still be Christ, and that Paul would still be Paul—that they would know one another; and that, Paul knew, would be glory for him. "Having the desire to depart and be with Christ." He could have written no such words as these, nor the words he wrote years later about his fast approaching end, if he had supposed that after death our souls

ooze away into a promiscuous fog of dissolved personalities.

Heaven would be an inferior place to earth in such a case. It cannot be so. Here we are distinct souls. All the experiences of life are giving edge and permanence to our distinction. We begin with different characters, and the years define these characters and set them in persistence. These are ourselves. We are not our features, our bodies, our moods, our actions, our sentiments—they are our properties and expressions. When they are done here, we are not over. We go on forever. And what goes on is our reality, our personality. And this is what each of us knows in his friend, his lover, his child, and what, thank God! we shall meet and know again in the infinitely richer and more glorious life beyond the mar and interruption of earth. There we shall resume the riven bonds. There we shall discover that our loves were eternal, because love is of God.

How much heaven will hold for us beyond all our most jubilant dreams, we may not know. We may well sing:

> "I know not, oh, I know not,
> What social joys are there,
> What radiancy of glory,
> What bliss beyond compare."

God could not tell us this if He would. We could not understand if He did. But one thing He has taught us by the indisputable convictions of our hearts and by the clear implication of His word—that those social joys will not exclude our reunion with those we love who have gone before, whom, having fallen asleep in

Jesus, our blessed Saviour will bring with Him when He comes. Let the lonesome heart be glad and rejoice with unswerving and patient hope until the day of reunion comes.

"Oh, then what raptured greetings
On Canaan's happy shore,
What knitting severed friendships up,
Where partings are no more!
Then eyes with joys shall sparkle,
That brimmed with tears of late,
Orphans no longer fatherless,
Nor widows desolate."

That, we may be sure, is what God has in store for us in the better life. And what is that better life but the standard and ideal of the life which we are living now on the earth? Let us be sure that we really possess here what we wish to keep forever.

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